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THE STUDY
OF
MILITARY HISTORY

**THE STUDY
OF
MILITARY HISTORY**

BY
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O.B.E., M.C., p.s.c.

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INTRODUCTION TO THIRD EDITION

THE FIRST edition of this book was published in 1931, under the title "Military History for the Staff College Entrance Examination," and was primarily designed as a help to candidates. After the Second World War the syllabus for this examination was somewhat altered, some of the campaigns previously set being omitted and new ones substituted. As a new edition of the book had therefore in any case become necessary, I thought it advisable to broaden its scope somewhat, in the hope that it might serve as a guide to any officer who wishes to embark on a serious study of military history. All the chapters of the original book have therefore been left in, although some of the campaigns are not now, and probably will not again be, included in the Examination Syllabus; additional chapters dealing with the three campaigns from the last war which have been set have also been added.

The method of study which I have found by experience to be the most fruitful is outlined in the introduction to the original edition. I have departed slightly from it in the three new chapters, in that specimen questions have not been set, or suggested answers given, as for the earlier campaigns. These chapters may therefore be found more adapted to the needs of those readers who would like to study military history, but are not compelled to do so by examination needs. But it must be emphasized that military history, if it is to be of use in increasing officers' professional knowledge, must be studied, not merely read, and that the method which has in practice been found most useful is for the student to set himself problems based on it and try to extract and set down its lessons.

The purpose of this book is not to do this for him; it is to help him to do it for himself; and I hope and believe that, as he does so, he may acquire some of the enjoyment of military history for its own sake which I myself have been fortunate enough to have felt ever since I first began to read it many years ago.

E. W. SHEPPARD.

GOthic COTTAGE,
SANDHURST,
CAMBERLEY, SURREY.

June, 1951.

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Sketch maps illustrating the particular campaign will be found at the end of each chapter, with the exception of the Great War, 1914-1918. When studying this campaign reference should be made to a general atlas.

DIALOGUE BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

Scene.—An Officers' Mess just after tea-time on a winter evening.

Dramatis Personæ.—Major Polonius, D.S.O., M.C., *p.s.c.*, and Captain Laertes.

As the curtain rises, Laertes is seen lying half-asleep in an armchair, his feet up on the curb-fender before the fire.

Enter Polonius.

P.: Hullo, Jack. So this is the way you study for the Staff College? Very nice, too.

L.: Oh, hullo, Major. Evening. It doesn't look as if I were being exactly industrious, does it? But I'm glad you came in, because I wanted to ask your advice. Unless you're busy on anything, that is!

P.: No, old boy, I'm no more busy than you seem to be—which isn't saying much—and I'd be glad to give you any help I can.

L.: Do you mean that, really?

P.: Yes, of course. What's your trouble?

L.: Well, I'm afraid you'll think it a silly sort of question, but I don't know how to begin to tackle a lot of the stuff I've got to cram up.

P.: Which part of it, particularly?

L.: Well, really, it's the military history. I've never read much of it, only just enough to pass my promotions, and what with being in India, and on the West Coast, and that sort of thing——

P.: Not to mention being idle, and taking no interest in your profession——

L.: Yes, well—perhaps. Anyhow, for the moment I'm snookered about it. I went into the garrison library the other day, and looked up the books on one or two of the campaigns. There were whole shelves full of them. I'd never read all that lot if I were to work twenty-four hours a day for ten years, I should think.

P.: But you don't want to read them all—or anything like all.

L.: Well, how do I begin, and where do I begin?

P.: Well, now, let's get down to this. (*He sits down on the curb-fender facing Laertes.*) It's a little hard for me to get into your shoes, because I've always read a lot of military history all my life—because I like it, no other reason—queer taste, I know——

L.: Very useful taste; I wish I'd had it.

P.: But if I didn't know anything at all about a particular campaign and wanted to start reading it up for the Staff College exam.—that's your position, isn't it?

L.: Exactly.

P.: Well, I think first of all I'd try to find just a brief outline—a few pages only, not more than ten or so—just bare broad facts, no details, and study that till I absolutely knew it.

L.: Where should I find that sort of thing?

P.: That's the first difficulty. You don't own an *Encyclopædia Britannica*, do you?

L.: No, I'm afraid not. I don't keep elephants in my quarters either.

P.: I thought probably not. Pity—some of the articles in them would have done very well; you might do worse than spend a little time reading them in the garrison library or the Royal United Service Institution—you're a member of that, of course?

L.: Yes, I've just joined.

P.: Good. Their library's most useful. Well, let's say you've done that. Now you want to read at least one short book on each of the campaigns—I think there are good ones on most of them—I mean books with comments and criticisms, to give you ideas—

L.: I shall need them and plenty of them.

P.: Well, take my advice. Don't take them all for gospel, just because the author says so. They're his ideas, and if you're going to make them yours you've got to understand them and agree with them.

L.: Amen. Well, go on. Anything more?

P.: Lord, yes, lots. We haven't started yet.

L.: Heaven help us!

P.: Then you ought really to read a longer book on each of the campaigns, too.

L.: I say, you do realize, don't you, that I've only got five years to go before I'll be over the age-limit for entrance?

P.: Really! I'd never have thought from the way you generally behave that you were as old as that.

L.: Thank you. But, seriously, you don't suggest I should read all the official histories of the Great War, or anything like that?

P.: Oh, Lord no! They're very good, but they're too long for what you want.

L.: Then, what sort of books do you mean?

P.: I can't reel a list off just like that! But if you like, I'll think it over and let you have one.

L.: Will you really? It's awfully good of you.

P.: Not a bit. It's you who will have to read the books, not I. Now, while you're reading the stuff dealing with each campaign I think I'd keep a notebook and jot down any points of interest that occur to you and may be useful.

L.: What sort of points?

P.: Oh, the old principles of war, you know—and that sort of thing: why one side chose one objective or another; what you can learn from this operation or from that general; what made men

like Napoleon or Wellington great commanders; the reason why one side won or the other lost a battle or a war—you'll find plenty to fill your notebook.

L.: Yes, that sounds all right. But it's one thing to amass all this knowledge and quite another to get it down on paper when I go up for the exam. If I haven't forgotten it all by then, I'll never know how to serve it up decently.

P.: Yes, of course, you'll want some practice at that. Get someone to set you questions on each campaign as you finish your study of it—not many, just four or five—and look over your answers.

L.: I don't know anyone who'd do that—unless you would.

P.: I wouldn't mind.

L.: That's even nicer of you than before. But why you should take all this trouble—by gad! Great Scott! That's a brain-wave!

P.: What is?

L.: Why, for the past half-hour I've been picking your brains, and sponging on your ideas. Now here's one of mine that may do you a bit of good. There must be a good few fellows going up for the Staff College each year——

P.: About two hundred, they tell me.

L.: Good Lord! Don't start being depressing, now. Anyway, quite a lot of them must be in the same sort of fix as I was before I began asking you about it—not knowing where to start or how to set to work to tackle this military history business.

P.: Quite possibly.

L.: Then, why don't you, when you've given me all this stuff you're going to give me for nothing, put it all down and publish it as a book? Start with your little outline of each campaign; give the names of the little books and the big books that are best for further reading. Jot down the points of interest a fellow ought to have in his notebook, set the questions on each campaign, and then give some sort of answers to serve as a model. I believe you'd do well with it; I'm sure it's just what lots of people want.

P.: Not a bad idea at all. In fact quite a good idea. I'll think about it.

L.: Don't think about it; do it. Anyhow, you've promised to do part of it, for my benefit.

P.: Yes—well, I'll try it on you—try it on the dog as it were; and if it works out well——.

CURTAIN

In the following pages the author, having taken upon himself the character of the somewhat pompous Major Polonius, has outlined the course of study suggested in the above dialogue. Captain Laertes will get the best value from it by pursuing it as follows:

THE OPERATIONS

- (a) Read the outline of each campaign once—if he can bear it, twice.
- (b) Follow this up by reading at least one, if not all, of the books recommended in the “Notes for Further Reading.”
- (c) Turn back to the “Notes on Points of Interest,” and consider these, adding to them any others that may occur to him.
- (d) Set himself to answer the “Questions on the Campaign.”
- (e) After he has answered these (and not till then), turn to the “Suggested Answers to Questions” and compare them with his own.
- (f) Then go on to the next campaign and repeat the process as before.

When revising, a rapid perusal of the outline and the “Notes on Points of Interest” should suffice to recall to him the results of his previous intensive study.

Finally, Major Polonius would like to remind Captain Laertes that his course of study will be of even greater value and interest to himself if he in some respects disagrees with the comments and answers given in the following pages, rather than agreeing with them in their entirety. The author’s object, like that of every wise guide, has throughout been to administer to the student a stimulant to thought rather than a substitute for it; for this purpose a violent emetic often serves even better than a sedative.

NAPOLEON'S CAMPAIGN IN ITALY, 1796

I. THE OPERATIONS

THE campaign falls naturally into three phases, as follows:

- (1) The French Offensive, March–May, 1796.
- (2) The Strategic Defensive before Mantua, June, 1796–February, 1797.
- (3) The Invasion of Austria, February–April, 1797.

1. The French Offensive, March–May, 1796

When Napoleon, at the end of March, 1796, assumed command of the French Army of Italy, in all some 60,000 strong, he found it extended along the coast from Albenga to Voltri, with covering troops on the southern slopes of the Maritime Alps and Apennines. His operations were to be subordinated to those of the main French armies in Germany; he was opposed by the Piedmontese, whose commander, Colli, had some 25,000 men facing the French left and centre to the north of the Maritime Alps, and by 30,000 Austrians under Beaulieu, facing the French right, between the mountains and the Po, with a further 10,000 north of that river. The French army was in a deplorable condition materially, and its moral had suffered from a long period of privation and ill-success. Napoleon, nevertheless, designed to take the offensive and crush the Piedmontese before the distant and scattered Austrian forces could come to their aid; but as he was completing his preparations and massing some 40,000 men, two-thirds of his forces, on his right and centre, facing the easiest mountain passage from the coast into the Bormida valley, the Austrians anticipated him by attacking his extreme right at Voltri. They moved in two widely separated columns, the one westward along the coast, the other southwards from the crest of the mountain range. This gave him an unhopèd-for opportunity to ensure the temporary elimination of the Austrians by concentrating superior numbers against the second column, which, checked at Montenotte by the French advanced troops, and heavily attacked in flank and rear by their main body, was defeated and dispersed with severe losses.

Napoleon was then free to turn eastwards against the Piedmontese in the area Ceva–Mondovì, leaving a detachment about Dego to cover his flank and rear against Beaulieu. The latter made no serious attempt to come to his ally's aid, but remained inactive on the south bank of the Po; and the French, their hands thus left free, in a series of actions, drove back the Piedmontese to Cherasco,

within a few marches of Turin, their capital. Here, at the end of April, the Piedmontese asked for an armistice under the terms of which they withdrew from the war, and left Napoleon free to deal with the Austrians.

Beaulieu had now fallen back to hold the line of the Po from Vercelli to Pavia, expecting the French to attempt a passage at Valenza, which was in Piedmontese territory, and therefore utilizable by them under the armistice terms. Napoleon, however, moving rapidly eastwards along the south bank of the river, forced his way across at Piacenza, thus menacing the hostile line of retreat. The Austrians succeeded by a hurried withdrawal under cover of a flank guard in reaching and crossing the Adda ahead of the main French forces. The brilliantly successful action of Lodi, fought only against their rearguard, was thus of importance only for its effect on the morale of the French army and on the personal ambition of its commander, who, he afterwards said, then realized for the first time the possibility of his dreams of glory becoming realities.

While the French were entering Milan in triumph, Beaulieu had fallen back behind the line of the Mincio, which he prepared to dispute. Napoleon, however, deceiving him by a series of feints at various points, crossed at Borghetto and pushed forward his left to threaten Beaulieu's line of retreat into the Tyrol. The Austrians threw a garrison into Mantua and retreated beyond the Adige; and the French, whose armies in Germany had not yet opened their campaign, sat down to besiege that fortress and to consolidate their gains by reducing to terms the princes of Central Italy, who were only too anxious to make friends with the victorious invaders.

2. The Strategic Defensive before Mantua, May, 1796-February, 1797

In July, Napoleon, who had his 30,000 men covering the siege in cordon formation along the line of the Adige and on both shores of the Lake of Garda, was attacked by a new adversary, Wurmser, moving with 60,000 men in two columns down either side of the lake. The Austrians met with such success that the French were soon in a highly critical position, with their line of retreat cut by the western column under Quosdanovich at Brescia, and the eastern one under Wurmser himself within a few miles of the fortress. Napoleon boldly decided to raise the siege, sacrifice his heavy artillery and concentrate all his forces to turn first on the one enemy column and then on the other while they were still separated. Quosdanovich was first repulsed, and driven off to the north in a series of actions at Lonato and Salò; and then Wurmser, who had come up after revictualling Mantua, was in his turn brought to battle at Castiglione, defeated, and compelled to withdraw into the Tyrol.

Thither Napoleon was now instructed by the French Govern-

ment to follow him in order to effect a junction with the armies in Germany, which were victoriously advancing into Bavaria. Wurmser was reorganizing his forces along the Upper Brenta between Trent and Bassano; Napoleon, advancing with 25,000 men up the Adige, suddenly broke into the valley by way of Trent, crushing one by one the scattered enemy detachments before they could assemble, and cutting them off from their base in the Tyrol. Wurmser, driven into the plains and headed off from Friuli, had no alternative but to make for Mantua, where he managed, after breaking his way through the blockading lines, to find a precarious and temporary refuge. But meanwhile, disaster having befallen the French armies in Germany, Napoleon saw himself compelled to give up his project of invading the Tyrol, and sit down once more before the fortress.

In November a third attempt at its relief was made, this time by 50,000 men under Alvinzy, who once more advanced in two separate columns, the one from Friuli eastwards against the middle Adige, the other down the upper stretches of that valley from Trent. Both gained initial success, but the Austrian northern column failed to press home its advantages and Napoleon had time to concentrate 8,000 men against Alvinzy's eastern column and carry out a bold manœuvre against its left and rear. In a fierce three days' battle at Arcola the French were victorious, and both Austrian columns beat a hasty retreat.

Two months later, in January, 1797, Alvinzy embarked on a fourth and last relief expedition; this time his main force moved from the Tyrol between Lake Garda and the Adige, a secondary one advancing from the east. The French, taking up their position on the plateau of Rivoli, crushed the columns of the hostile main army one by one as they tried to struggle up from the valley, and the victory was complete. Meanwhile, the second Austrian force had made its way as far as the investing lines, where, caught between these and the main French army returning south, it was compelled to lay down its arms. A few days later Mantua itself capitulated.

3. The Invasion of Austria, February–April, 1797

Napoleon, with 60,000 men under his command, was now in a position to assume the offensive into the heart of Austria, who could give her best general, the Archduke Charles, only 50,000 men wherewith to oppose him. Forcing the passage of the Tagliamento and pushing aside the resistance of the weak hostile detachments encountered in the passes beyond, he made his way victoriously to the crest of the mountains within sight of Vienna, less than fifty miles away. Here, despite the failure of the French army of the Rhine to co-operate with him as had been promised, he was able to induce the Austrians to sign an armistice at Leoben, and thus bring his first campaign to a triumphant conclusion.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

There is, unhappily, no really good English narrative of the 1796 campaign as a whole. The initial offensive has been well treated by Professor Spenser Wilkinson in his *Rise of General Bonaparte*, and by Marshal Foch in *The Principles of War*; but for the subsequent operations the student is compelled to fall back on the account in Hamley's *Operations of War*, or in Volume XI of the 11th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Those who can read French, however, have at their disposal besides the useful summary in Camon's *La Guerre Napoléonienne*, the most valuable and admirable *Etudes sur la Campagne de 1796-7 en Italie*, by J. C. (General Colin).

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Napoleon's initial plan of operations is worthy of note, as an excellent example of the adaptation of one cardinal principle of war to a particular case. He himself once stated that he always saw but one objective, the enemy's principal army; yet here we find him first aiming his main blow at the weaker partner in the hostile alliance, the Piedmontese, and devoting all his energies to reducing them to terms. His reasons for this course were, firstly, that Piedmont's half-heartedness in the war and the lack of cordial co-operation between her and her Austrian allies made it possible for him to finish quickly with her, and so gain a striking initial success; and secondly, that the respective position of Colli's and Beaulieu's forces made it impossible for him to deal effectively with the latter so long as the former lay intact to the west, on the flank and rear of any northward advance towards the Po. Moreover, while a speedy victory over the near-by Piedmontese forces was possible, the operations against Beaulieu, who lay at a distance and had all North Italy to retire into, could hardly be brought to a rapid conclusion. Thus Napoleon departed, and on this occasion with justification, from a principle which he himself, in common with our own Field Service Regulations, recognized to be of general, but not of invariable validity.

2. These first operations of the campaign form a classic example of the correct application of the twin principles of mobility and economy of force. The high French mobility was due in part, of course, to the fact that they moved light and were not fettered by cumbrous equipment and an elaborate supply system as were their adversaries, but at least as much to the simplicity and decision of their plans, the brevity of their orders, the efficiency of their staff work, and their rapidity of execution. Equally to be noted and admired is the skilful way in which Napoleon concentrated and utilized every available man in the area and for the operation which was for the time being the main one, leaving only the bare minimum for necessary but secondary tasks. Thus he was enabled

to give in this his first campaign one of the most striking exhibitions in all history of what he termed "the art of beating large armies with small ones."

3. It is perhaps worth while placing on record here the exact sense in which Napoleon understood the principle of concentration. He frequently and rightly stressed the importance of its observance, but he made a clear distinction between a force grouped or assembled for a strategic operation and a force massed for battle. When no immediate contact with the enemy was to be expected, considerations of mobility and ease of administration, being paramount, demanded that an army should be widely spread out to make use of all available roads and resources; but as it came within reach of the enemy it had to be drawn more together under its commander's hand to be ready for all contingencies, until, when battle became imminent, it was so closely collected that every available man could be brought on to the field. In Napoleon's view, so long as an army was so disposed as to be under control of its commander for whatever purpose it could be required, the principle of concentration was being duly observed.

4. Napoleon, when acting on the offensive, as he always did whenever possible, had two favourite manœuvres, both of which are illustrated in this campaign. The first is that known as the manœuvre from a central position, or on interior lines; to execute it, he threw his army rapidly and by surprise into the midst of an area held by a widely dispersed enemy, or by two widely separated allied enemies, and turned on and beat first one fraction and then the other with the bulk of his forces, at the same time using a detachment to hold the remainder at arm's length. The operations around Montenotte and Dego form a good example of this form of manœuvre. The second, illustrated, though not with complete success, by the operations leading up to Lodi, consisted in a rapid march round the enemy's flank, with the purpose of seizing a topographical barrier (such as a river, or mountain range) running across his rear communications. The adversary would then be compelled either to face about and fight a battle on a reversed front in order to regain his severed communications, or else to order a general retreat and run the risk of being caught and defeated in detail.

5. It may seem at first sight strange that a general as convinced as was Napoleon of the virtues of the offensive, and the importance of speedy decisive action, should have been content to allow himself to be detained in Italy by the resistance of a single fortress. But in view of the fact that his army was too weak to invade Germany except in conjunction with the main French armies in that theatre, their defeat left him no other choice. But he realized that owing to the necessity laid upon Austria of keeping him out of the main theatre as long as possible, she was bound to make every effort to

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relieve the fortress, which would thus serve as a bait to attract within his reach hostile forces which he was not in a position to seek out and destroy. Thus he was given opportunity, in the course of the nine months which it took him to reduce Mantua to surrender, of dealing with Austrian forces totalling more than three times his own strength, which, sent forward as they were in succession instead of *en masse*, he was able to defeat one after the other. This was indeed a masterly use of the strategic defensive, which in Napoleon's hands thus became, as Clausewitz termed it, the stronger form of war.

6. Bonaparte's defensive system on the Adige was, as we have seen, essentially an active one, depending for its success, first, on early information of any hostile advance obtained by the screen of detachments observing all routes of approach; second, on the rapid concentration at the point most seriously threatened of all available forces, even at the cost of neglecting all secondary aims, so as to attack and overwhelm the enemy there, subsequent to which any subsidiary hostile forces could be dealt with at leisure. Information, security, mobility, and concentration—these principles were the keynotes of Napoleon's system of strategic defensive which bears a distinct resemblance to his favourite offensive manoeuvre from a central position.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

1. Give examples from this campaign of the principle of concentration as understood and applied by Napoleon.
2. Discuss the applicability and value of Napoleon's two favourite strategical manoeuvres in modern warfare.
3. "Whatever the relations between fortress and field-army, the latter must make it a supreme rule never to allow itself to be thrown into a fortress." Illustrate from the operations round Mantua the role played by a fortress in warfare.
4. "The aim in providing for security must be to ensure liberty of action, to be prepared to meet and defeat the enemy's counter-strokes, to conserve strength, and to maintain essential interests." (F.S.R. II, 8, vii.) Discuss this with reference to Napoleon's dispositions for covering the siege of Mantua.
5. How do you reconcile Napoleon's achievements in 1796 with his dictum that "God is on the side of the big battalions"?

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. We have seen above that Napoleon drew a distinction between an army assembled (with its different component parts held sufficiently in hand to allow of their concentration to meet any possible eventuality), and massed (as on the eve of an expected

battle). As examples of his practice, it will be found that at the opening of this campaign the French forces, 40,000 strong, were spread out on a front of some seventy-five miles; yet, when the Austrian attack developed at Montenotte, practically the whole of these forces could be rapidly massed to deal with and defeat it. Similarly, at the time when Napoleon's leading troops effected their passage of the Po at Piacenza, his rear was some forty miles behind; yet he was able to bring into action at Lodi numbers superior to those of the Austrians. Even better examples are given by the various episodes of the strategic defensive before Mantua; the French line of forward posts measured one hundred miles from flank to flank, yet in each of their offensives the Austrians found themselves outnumbered on the decisive battlefield. Thus, despite the wide area of country often occupied by his forces, Napoleon always had them well in hand and available for use as and when he required them.

2. Napoleon's favourite manœuvres, as we have seen, were the attack against the hostile rear and a succession of attacks in a central position.

- (a) The communications of a modern army are probably today more vulnerable, and its dependence on them greater than at any previous period in history. In addition, mobility has been greatly enhanced by the use of armoured fighting vehicles and mechanical transport, and nowadays mobile columns can be equipped for rapid movement at a rate relatively far greater, compared to the main force of the adversary, than would ever have been possible in Napoleon's time. They will, in addition, enjoy the valuable guidance and assistance of the air arm. We may say that under modern conditions the first Napoleonic manœuvre may well be adapted for use with a speed and efficiency of which its author could not have conceived.
- (b) The manœuvre from a central position on the other hand depended for its success on obtaining a rapid and complete decision in the first and succeeding offensive actions; and this under modern conditions would probably prove less easy of attainment than Napoleon found it. Moreover, present-day means of information and inter-communication would tend to facilitate the co-operation of the separated forces of the enemy, and enable him to avoid being defeated in detail. It seems that only under special circumstances—*e.g.*, if the enemy were very widely dispersed or if his columns were divided by impassable natural obstacles—would this second of the Napoleonic manœuvres still retain its value today.

3. The true role of a fortress in war is to block an adversary's

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line of approach or make it necessary for him to devote to its investment forces and time which will be lost for the main purpose of his campaign. The resistance of Mantua, as has been narrated, retained the French in Italy, far from the decisive theatre in Germany, for nine months, but this was due rather to the ill-success of the French armies in that main theatre, and to Napoleon's inability to achieve anything there without them, than to any particular importance he attached to the possession of Mantua itself. Moreover, the necessity for keeping the resistance of the fortress alive as long as possible led the Austrians to devote to its relief forces disproportionate to the end to be achieved, and by inducing her to throw in these forces in succession instead of in mass, exposed her to a series of heavy losses and defeats. It is in fact doubtful if the effect of the resistance of Mantua was not in the long run to the advantage of Napoleon rather than to that of his enemies.

4. Napoleon's scheme for covering the siege of Mantua comprised:

- (a) Detachments, kept as small as possible, on all possible routes of hostile approach to watch for and delay attack.
- (b) A centrally placed reserve ready for a rapid move to the point of greatest danger.
- (c) A force blockading the fortress itself.

His method of operation was first to fall with the bulk of his force on that one of the Austrian relieving columns which lay nearest to hand, using the residue to hold off any others that simultaneously presented themselves, and then to deal in turn with these. The blockading force could be, and was, called in at need to take part in these offensives, for once the attempt at relief had been beaten off, the siege could be renewed with but little loss of time. It was in this way that his system provided for the various aims laid down in the quotation, and on all those heads it may form a model worthy of future imitation.

5. Although inferior in numbers in the whole theatre of war, Napoleon yet managed always to be superior on the battlefield chosen by him. Massing his forces, he would fall fiercely on a portion of the hostile army, and once that had been defeated would turn upon another, until the whole, crushed, or at least demoralized, by the swiftness and violence of his attacks, gave up the contest, and left him victorious. Economy of force—concentration—mobility—surprise—offensive action—these were the means by which he, with his numerically inferior forces, wrested victory from adversaries, who, despite the general disproportion of strength in their favour, almost always found themselves outnumbered on the battlefield.

THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN, 1815

I. THE OPERATIONS

THE Waterloo Campaign falls into three phases:

- (1) The French Concentration, 6th–14th June.
- (2) The Attack on the Prussians, 15th–16th June.
- (3) The Attack on the British, 17th–18th June.

1. The French Concentration, 6th–14th June

1. Immediately on the return of Napoleon from Elba and reassumption of power in France in March, 1815, the Allies declared war against him and prepared once more to drive him from the throne. Their plan was to invade France from south-east, east, and north-east, with armies totalling in all over 500,000 men; but of these only the British and Netherlands contingents, 90,000 men under Wellington, and the Prussians under Blücher, 120,000 men, were immediately ready for action. Early in June both these armies were stationed in Belgium; Wellington's forces, based on Ostend, stretched from the Charleroi–Brussels road westward to the Lys and Scheldt; Blücher's, based on the Rhine, extended eastwards to the Meuse valley. Neither expected a French attack; hence their wide dispersion, for convenience of accommodation and supply, over an area a hundred miles wide by fifty miles deep. The Anglo-Dutch army lacked homogeneity: even its best elements, the British, were inexperienced, and the Dutch had little enthusiasm for the cause in which they were fighting. The Prussian army also, though loyal and patriotic, consisted largely of raw militia untried in war.

Napoleon, faced with the alternative of awaiting invasion by forces vastly superior to those at his disposal, or of striking at Wellington and Blücher in Belgium before the remainder of their Allies could reach the scene of hostilities, chose the latter course. After leaving 55,000 regular soldiers, backed by 400,000 of the second line, to observe France's eastern and south-eastern frontiers, he had at his disposal for this offensive a striking force of 125,000 men—all war-hardened and devoted, but deficient in cohesion and discipline. His plan was secretly to assemble this force, which at the beginning of June was dispersed over all north-eastern France, opposite the junction between the Allied armies on the Sambre, and put into practice against them his favourite offensive manoeuvre from a central position. He hoped to be able to deal with the impetuous Prussian commander before the cautious Englishman,

whose forces were the more widely dispersed, could come to his aid; or at least to compel both to retire on their separate bases and leave him free to occupy Brussels and overrun Belgium. All depended on the swiftness and secrecy of his concentration, and, in fact, by the evening of 14th June he had succeeded in collecting his army south of the Sambre, in the area Philippeville–Beaumont, without the Allies having more than vague suspicions of the threatening danger.

2. The Attack on the Prussians, 15th–16th June

Despite delays due to poor staff work and a series of skilful rear-guard actions, fought by the foremost Prussian Corps under Zieten, Napoleon in the course of the 15th got the greater part of his army across the Sambre, and pushed his right wing forward as far as Fleurus, and his left under Ney to within striking distance of Quatre Bras, an important road junction on the shortest lateral line of communication between the Allies. Wellington, obsessed by fears for his right flank, and without definite news of what was happening on his front, remained inactive all this day; while the fiery Blücher, as Napoleon anticipated, was hurrying to concentrate for battle at Ligny. Here, on the 16th, he was attacked by the French main army and defeated, while Ney, though his early inactivity lost him the chance of a victory over the English at Quatre Bras, prevented any help from them reaching the Prussians. Thanks, however, to a strange series of *contretemps* which kept d'Erlon's French corps absent all day from both fields, the Prussians were not so decisively beaten as to be put out of action or prevented from carrying out an unmolested retirement northward to Wavre, where they were still in touch with their Allies.

3. The Attack on the British, 17th–18th June

Of more serious effect still were the French delays on the morning of the 17th, which allowed the British to commence their retreat to the position of Waterloo, previously selected by Wellington as suitable for fighting a battle to cover Brussels and caused Napoleon to lose sight of, and touch with, the retiring Prussians. Consequently, when at length he led the bulk of his army over to assist Ney in dealing with Wellington, the latter escaped under cover of a skilful rear-guard action and a heavy thunderstorm; and Grouchy, who, with 30,000 men, had been sent to follow up and contain Blücher, got no farther than Gembloux, and failed to realize the importance of doing everything possible to keep him apart from Wellington.

The battle of Waterloo on 18th June was mismanaged by the French, whose attacks, delivered piecemeal and frontally, failed to break the stubborn British lines, and was finally decided, late in the evening, after the final desperate onslaught of the Imperial Guard

had been repulsed, by the arrival on Napoleon's flank and rear of the bulk of the Prussian army, which, unmolested by Grouchy, had been left free to come to the aid of its hard-pressed Allies. The pursuit, furiously pressed all that night, completed the destruction of the French army, of which only Grouchy's detachment escaped as a formed body. The Allies, therefore, met no opposition in their further advance on Paris, so that the battle thus decided the fate of Napoleon and of France, and indeed of all Europe for the next forty years.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Out of the many hundred volumes in all languages on the Waterloo Campaign, the student is advised to begin with the excellent summary in Belloc's *Six British Battles*, or the article in the 11th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and for a fuller account to turn to Major A. F. Becke's *Napoleon and Waterloo*.

For those who can read French, Houssaye's brilliant 1815, *Waterloo*, and a knowledgeable and unusual volume, *L'Enigme de Waterloo*, by E. Lenient, will well repay perusal. Grouard's *La Critique de la Campagne de 1815* is an excellent summary of the operations in short compass.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. The distribution made by Napoleon of the military resources at his disposal after his return to France and the Allied declaration of war against him is of considerable interest. It will be remembered that of his available 180,000 regular troops he allotted a third to the purely passive observation of frontiers which at the moment were in no way threatened, leaving only the balance for his offensive in Belgium against forces almost double this figure. This would seem to be a transgression against the principle of concentration of every possible man at the decisive time and place, which had been one secret of his many past victories. As it happened, even 10,000 more Frenchmen in Belgium must have turned the whole course of the campaign; Ligny would have been a great and decisive victory, Waterloo would never have been fought, and all the Low Countries must have fallen into French hands once more. Moreover, the forces allotted to the eastern and south-eastern frontiers were in any case too weak seriously to oppose any real Allied attack. Nevertheless, the Emperor, in view of the precariousness of his hold on power, the activity and strength of hostile elements in the country and the importance from the point of view of morale and prestige of preventing as long as possible any invasion of French territory, felt that these 55,000 men were the minimum necessary for these subsidiary purposes. We thus see how on occasion the dictates of sound strategy have to give way before the paramount considerations of equally sound but contradictory policy.

2. The admirable effect of initial surprise achieved by the Emperor was due in part no doubt to the inadequate security measures adopted by his enemies, and to their failure to realize, even on receipt of the first indication, that he was about to burst suddenly upon them. But the methods adopted by him to lull them into a false security were themselves most thorough and effective. Demonstrations and false attacks, carried out by second-line troops in the Lille area, were skilfully devised to foster that fear for his right flank which obsessed Wellington right up to the day of Waterloo. The closing of the frontier and the interruption even of sea traffic from 7th June onwards prevented any leakage of information, other than false reports sedulously spread by the Emperor's own agents. The marches of the various corps to the concentration area were carefully concealed, many of them being carried out by night; and the regular troops, as they were withdrawn, were replaced by second-line units. Finally, Napoleon's own departure from Paris was delayed until 11th June, lest news of it should reach and serve as a danger signal to the enemy. This combination of Allied heedlessness and his own careful and thorough methods of concealment and deception, placed that most valuable of weapons, surprise, in French hands from the first.

3. That this weapon served its possessors less well than might have been expected in the first operations of the campaign, was due in part to the serious and unnecessary delays attending the French crossing of the Sambre, and still more to the skilful conduct of the covering operations by Zieten's Prussian corps on that river line. Holding a wide front and in very close proximity to the selected point of concentration for Blucher's army, it nevertheless succeeded in imposing on and delaying the enemy's advance, and in carrying out a step by step defence and a gradual retirement which gained for its main body all the time necessary for its assembly as planned. It seems indeed that Zieten's curious omission to destroy the river bridges was the only blot on his highly creditable and valuable performance of a very difficult role.

4. Napoleon's plan for the continuance of his operations after the passage of the Sambre involved the division of his forces into two wings under Grouchy and Ney, with a central reserve under his own hand to reinforce either at need. The device was in theory well suited to such a situation as that in which he then stood, and had often been previously practised by him with success; but here it failed to give of its full effect. This was in part due to the fact that neither of the wing commanders were equal to the part they had to play, misconceiving the situation and allowing themselves to be too easily imposed on and delayed by the show of weak hostile forces. Fortune, also as in the case of the inexplicable wanderings of d'Erlon's corps on the 16th, was unkind to the French. But perhaps the main reason for the failure lay in Napoleon's own neglect,

at certain critical moments of the campaign, to display that tireless and incessant energy and decision which had served him so well in his younger days. On all these critical mornings of the campaign we see him strangely inactive—whether from weariness, ill-health, indecision or inordinate pride has been debated at length by many historians, but never decided—and frittering away thereby the great initial advantage over his enemies he had acquired by his first operations.

5. It is to be remarked, however, that whereas Napoleon's genius was exemplified at its best in the opening moves of the campaign and shone more and more fitfully towards its close, Wellington and Blücher were able to redeem their initial errors and omissions by the admirable closeness of their co-operation and the skilful manner in which each executed his part in the combined plans. In this they showed true loyalty and greatness, all the more noteworthy because their characters were temperamentally very different, as were their methods of making war; while there was little mutual cordiality and confidence between the staffs and troops. The Prussians showed great clear-sightedness and resolution in abandoning their communications after Ligny and staking all on retaining touch with their Allies, and an equal determination and spirit animated the effort which brought them up at the right time and place to decide the fate of the day at Waterloo. But nothing they could have done would have availed without the coolness and skill of Wellington and the courage and constancy of his troops in so firmly facing and beating off the French attacks during the whole of that day, and thus giving the Prussians the opportunity for their victorious counterstroke. Both Allied commanders, in fact, never lost sight of their common object, were prepared to put co-operation first and foremost, and for its sake to sacrifice their individual interests without fear or hesitation.

6. Waterloo stands out in history with Jena as the classical instance in history of the complete exploitation of a victory by a furious and relentless pursuit. It is worthy of note that this was only possible by reason of the arrival on the battlefield, just prior to the decision being obtained, of a fresh and intact Prussian force, well in hand and eager for a fight, and also because the French army had reached the breaking point morally and physically, and, having thrown in its last reserves, had no troops left to cover its retreat. A successful pursuit is the rarest phenomenon in military history just because the victor, being usually almost as exhausted as the vanquished, has neither the moral nor the material resources to undertake and push it.

7. The action of Grouchy's detachment has given rise to more controversy than any other phase of this much disputed campaign. It is true that it was sent on its mission very late and in the wrong direction, and that the instructions given to its commander were

expressed with insufficient clarity. But the true cause of Grouchy's failure to fulfil his role was that, as his previous career had shown, he had not the qualifications for a task which called for an unusual degree of energy, insight and initiative. That he was selected for it at all is a serious reflection on Napoleon's judgment; nor was it made easier for him by the lack of any subsequent help or guidance from the Emperor. That Grouchy had considerable military capacity was shown by his able handling of his command in the subsequent retreat from Wavre; and it is in any case doubtful whether on the day of Waterloo anything he could have done would have changed the ultimate result of the battle or of the campaign.

8. The true cause of the French defeat at Waterloo has been discussed and disputed in hundreds of volumes in all languages. It seems unnecessary to seek it elsewhere than in the great numerical superiority of the Allies, which, in the absence of any equally overwhelming French superiority of fighting qualities or leadership, was in the end bound to prove decisive.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

1. Why was Napoleon successful in his initial operations in the Italian campaign of 1796, and failed at Waterloo when acting apparently in similar circumstances and on a similar plan?

2. Illustrate from this campaign the importance of good information in war.

3. "I may lose a battle, but I will never lose a minute" (Napoleon). Can Napoleon in this campaign be said always to have lived up to this maxim, and can you account for any failure on his part to do so?

4. What lessons as to the employment and conduct of a containing detachment can be gathered from the action of Grouchy's force on 17th and 18th June, 1815?

5. Do you think the issue of the campaign would have been different if it had been fought out by modern armies and under modern conditions?

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. Napoleon's plan in either case was to manœuvre from a central position against two allied armies with divergent lines of communication, and overwhelm them by blows, first against the one, and then against the other. Blucher and Wellington, however, were not only opponents of a very different calibre from Colli and Beaulieu, but were imbued with the common interest and prepared to sacrifice their communications for the sake of ensuring the unity of their operations and the close combination of their forces. Moreover, the terrain of Belgium, open and well roaded, was more favourable for movement in all directions than the mountainous area of Piedmont, in which the campaign of 1796

opened, so that inter-communication between the Allies was easier; while the French of 1815 no longer enjoyed any great moral or material advantage either strategically or tactically, even Napoleon's methods being well known to his enemies. The main cause of the difference in the result of the two campaigns lay, however, less in the plans than in the execution, which in 1815 was vastly inferior to that of 1796.

2. Instances might include:

- (a) The great and perilous delay in the British concentration caused by Wellington's lack of information of the opening of the French offensive.
- (b) Napoleon's loss of touch with the Prussians after Ligny, which caused a disastrous hesitancy in the opening of his operations on the 17th, and led him to a completely erroneous misconception of the risks of delivering battle at Waterloo.
- (c) Ney's failure to notify Napoleon of the result of his action at Quatre Bras, which allowed the British ample leisure to effect their withdrawal before the arrival of the French main body.
- (d) The fog of war which surrounded Grouchy as to the Prussian situation and movements on the 17th and 18th, and caused the misdirection and waste of his detachment at the crisis of the campaign.

3. The hesitancy and dilatoriness of the Emperor on all three mornings of this campaign (after the first) were so marked and so contrary to his normal practice and maxims that historians of the campaign have usually been at a loss to account for them. His delay on the 16th before opening the battle of Ligny was attributable partly to the fact that his army was widely scattered, and possibly to his desire to allow Blücher to concentrate so that he could dispose of him at one blow—though, if this latter were the case, great risks were taken in giving him time to mass forces superior to those at Napoleon's own disposal. The delay in beginning the battle of Waterloo may be plausibly put down to the necessity of letting the ground dry and making it more possible for troop movement, though, again, this proved a mistaken policy. But the waste of the whole morning of the 17th without any attempt being made either to pursue Blücher or to turn on Wellington can be neither accounted for nor excused. By it the fate of the campaign, already compromised by the incomplete results achieved on the 16th, was finally jeopardized; and Napoleon was to have bitter experience of the truth of his own saying, "Fortune is a woman; if you lose her today, do not expect to find her again tomorrow."

4. From the errors of Grouchy and the misfortunes of his command on the two final days of the campaign, we may deduce the

following lessons as to the employment and conduct of a containing detachment:

- (a) Its commander must be given all the information available, and be placed in full touch with the situation before he is dispatched on his mission.
- (b) It is his chief's duty to give him, and his own responsibility to see that he is given, clear and full written instructions as to what his role is, and the general lines on which he is expected to carry it out.
- (c) Inter-communication between detachment and main army must be constantly maintained and exchange of information between the commanders must be full, frank and frequent.
- (d) The detachment commander must be given, and must make full use of, ample means of attaining information.
- (e) Mobile troops should form a large proportion of the containing force, so that its dispositions may be readily adapted to meet any eventuality.
- (f) The detachment commander must be ready to assume responsibility and to act on his own initiative where necessary, and must not allow himself to be bound down by orders possibly no longer applicable.
- (g) "When in doubt, march to the sound of the guns," is still good counsel for a commander on a detached mission.

5. Napoleon's plan in 1815 relied for its success on surprise, the possibility of a swift decision against Blücher and the ability to keep Wellington away from the battlefield till this had been achieved.

As regards surprise, air reconnaissance today would probably have revealed the French concentration, or at least their earlier moves, to the Allies, and modern means of inter-communication and transport would have facilitated consultation between them and the rapid assembly of their forces to meet the danger. The containing power of modern weapons would have enabled the Prussian advanced troops to oppose a longer resistance to the French, and their rearmost forces could have been brought up to the battlefield of Ligny more quickly. Even the possession of strong armoured forces would hardly have made it possible for Napoleon to gain a rapid decision over Blücher, owing to the difficulty of reconnaissance and the lengthy preliminary phases of the battle. Any increase in the power of Ney's force to contain Wellington with modern weapons would probably have been offset by the earlier arrival of the British forces on the field. It is, in short, doubtful if the result of the campaign would have been at all different, had it been fought out by armies of the present day.

THE PENINSULAR WAR, 1808-1814

I. THE OPERATIONS

THE operations in the Spanish Peninsula during these four years fall, as far as the British army was concerned, into eight phases:

- (1) The Loss and Recovery of Portugal, April–August, 1808.
- (2) Moore's Raid into Spain, September, 1808–January, 1809.
- (3) The Abortive Allied Offensive, May–December, 1809.
- (4) The Repulse of Massena's Invasion of Portugal, January, 1810–May, 1811.
- (5) The Period of Stalemate, June–December, 1811.
- (6) The First Great British Offensive, January–October, 1812.
- (7) The Reconquest of Spain, May–October, 1813.
- (8) The British Advance into Southern France, October, 1813–April, 1814.

1. The Loss and Recovery of Portugal, April–August, 1808

In 1808, Napoleon, then at the zenith of his power, resolved to add the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal to the territories under his rule. An expeditionary force under Junot marched across Spain to Lisbon and drove the Portuguese king from his throne. Soon afterwards the Spanish royal family was also induced to abdicate; Joseph, Napoleon's elder brother, was proclaimed king, and French armies overran all Spain. But the whole country at once flared up into insurrection; the French met with a series of defeats, which soon compelled them to abandon Madrid and all the centre and south of the Peninsula and retire behind the line of the Ebro, leaving Junot with his 25,000 men isolated in Portugal.

Pursuant to the request of the Spanish authorities for aid, the British Government determined to send an expedition to expel Junot; 14,000 men were placed under the command of Wellington for this purpose, and on 1st August, 1808, an advanced body effected an unopposed landing at Mondego Bay, 100 miles north of Lisbon. Junot's command was widely dispersed, but thanks to the skilful delaying action of his forward troops, he gained time to assemble about half of it, and moved up to attack the British, who had taken post near the coast at Vimieiro to cover the landing of reinforcements. His attacks, delivered piecemeal and without adequate reconnaissance or preparation, were beaten off one after the other; and Wellington was about to pass to a counter-offensive when two senior generals, who had been sent out to supersede him,

intervened to forbid it, and the French effected their withdrawal unmolested. Junot's position, isolated in the heart of a bitterly hostile country, was however so perilous that he counted himself fortunate to be able to induce the victors to agree to his peaceful evacuation of Portugal under the terms of the convention of Cintra—much to the indignation of the British people at home, who insisted that all the three commanders concerned should be called back to give account of their conduct. Nevertheless, much had been won—the liberation of Portugal, a solid base for the British army in the Peninsula, and a breathing space which the Spanish utilized to raise and organize new armies, formidable indeed in numbers, but unhappily of little military value.

2. Moore's Raid into Spain, September, 1808–January, 1809

The hopelessness of any prospect that these hastily formed forces could put up any real resistance to the war-hardened French veterans was quickly shown, following on the arrival of Napoleon in person to retrieve the situation. In November, in a few fierce but brief battles, he utterly routed and scattered the Spanish levies, brought back his brother in triumph to Madrid, and laid his plans for the further conquest of Portugal and Andalusia. But before these could be put into effect he had to turn northwards to deal with a new and less contemptible enemy—35,000 British under Moore, who had suddenly appeared on his flank and rear, menacing Soult, who had been posted as flank guard at Sahagun.

Moore had been sent to Portugal with orders to lead forward his army to co-operate with the Spaniards on the Ebro line. The military value of these allies had been much overrated, and he had planned a leisurely advance on a very wide front, part of his forces, newly arrived from England, marching from Corunna, and part from Lisbon by two divergent routes to a concentration point at Burgos. When he reached Salamanca, with his army still scattered over 200 miles of front, he heard that his allies had been beaten and scattered, and found himself alone and menaced by overwhelming hostile numbers. Realizing, however, that the bulk of Napoleon's army was moving not directly upon him but south across his front, he thought better of his first resolve to retire, and planned to strike at the isolated flank guard of Soult. But before he could do so he heard that Napoleon had turned north from Madrid, aiming for his rear at Benevente. He ordered an instant retreat, slipped across the front of the pursuit with only a few hours to spare, and made at full speed for Corunna and his transports. Soult, entrusted with the pursuit, followed him up, but it was the rigours of the winter and the furious speed of the retreat, rather than enemy pressure, which all but ruined Moore's army before its arrival at Corunna. A few days' rest enabled the British to leave the Peninsula with credit by beating off their pursuers in a battle which cost Moore his life. His campaign

had at least given the Spaniards a further respite, which they utilized to prepare for a guerrilla warfare, better suited to their temperament and to local conditions than more regular operations such as those just terminated so disastrously.

3. The Abortive Allied Offensive, May–December, 1809

None the less, when in May, 1809, Wellington returned to take command at Lisbon, all Spain was overrun by French arms, and Soult had possessed himself of the northern province of Portugal. He resolved first to strike at his nearest adversary. Soult, taken by surprise while dispersed, was defeated at Oporto, where the British effected a daring and skilful crossing of the Douro under his very eyes, and compelled him to throw himself into the mountains to the north-east and sacrifice his guns to escape being cut off and destroyed. The British now turned south to deal with Victor, who was guarding the Tagus valley and the approach to Madrid, and was faced by a Spanish corps under Cuesta, with whom Wellington endeavoured to co-operate. The Allies' dissensions and loss of time, however, enabled Victor to bring up reinforcements, and force them to deliver a defensive battle at Talavera. After two days' fighting, in which the British bore all the brunt, he was beaten off; but Soult threatening to come down on their rear from Salamanca, where he had rallied and reorganized, they were forced to fall back in haste, cross the Tagus, and find refuge about Badajos. Here Wellington remained all the rest of the summer, leaving his allies to conduct a series of ill-conceived and futile operations in which they showed themselves no match for the French.

4. The Repulse of Massena's Invasion of Portugal, January, 1810–May, 1811

Napoleon had now determined in a great effort to finish off the Peninsular operations. Soult overran Andalusia to the gates of Cadiz, and a new commander, Massena, collected 90,000 men on the Portuguese north-eastern frontier to drive the British into the sea. Wellington's policy was to retire slowly before him, devastating the country as he went, and finally seek refuge in the strong defensive lines he had constructed at Torres Vedras, north of Lisbon, where he considered he could defy attack. All went as he had foreseen; Massena, his advance delayed by the necessity of first capturing the frontier fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, moved slowly south-westwards, the British falling back before him to a position at Busaco, where they stood to fight. The French attacks were repulsed with ease, but Massena found a road by which he could turn Wellington, and the latter resumed his retreat to his lines. These, however, proved to be too formidable for the French to venture to attack, for they had now only 55,000 men against Wellington's 60,000 British and 20,000 Portuguese; but they

refused to give the game up as lost until a whole month had elapsed, and then fell back only a few miles to Santarem, where they again halted, and in their turn, defied the British to assail them.

However, in March, 1811, they had to retire once more, and slowly, with many a stubborn rear-guard action, drew back to Guarda and thence after a vain attempt to break southwards to the Tagus, to the Salamanca area. This last stage of the French retreat uncovered Almeida, to which Wellington laid siege. Massena, after a spell of rest, advanced to relieve it, and encountered the British at Fuentes d'Onoro; he succeeded in turning Wellington's right, and for a time the position was precarious; but the defence re-established itself on new ground, which was too strong to attack. A few days later Almeida fell into British hands, after the garrison had succeeded in forcing its way out and making its escape.

5. The Period of Stalemate, June–December, 1811

Wellington, with the main army, now set down to invest Ciudad Rodrigo, but his presence was soon necessary to the south, where a detachment under Beresford, which he had sent to invest Badajoz, had been in trouble. Soult advanced to relieve the fortress; Beresford, out-generalled, was only saved from defeat at Albuera by the staunchness and valour of his troops, and Wellington took down reinforcements to expedite the operations. But the French army of Portugal, now under Marmont, also arrived from the north to join Soult, and put the British in a numerical inferiority which compelled them to abandon the siege of Badajoz, but was not sufficiently pronounced to induce the combined French armies to attack them in their chosen position about Elvas. Wellington, thereupon, seeing that the situation in this quarter had been stabilized returned north with his main army to lay siege to Ciudad Rodrigo; but Marmont, who had followed suit, and had received reinforcements, took the offensive, out-mancœuvred him, and forced him back to a strong position at Sabugal, whence the British, after having once more offered battle, retired to winter quarters within the Portuguese frontier around Guarda. A brilliant little enterprise by Hill at Arroyo dos Molinos closed creditably the disappointing year of 1811.

6. The First British Offensive, January–October, 1812

The opening of 1812 was brilliant. In January, Wellington, taking by surprise the French who were weakened by detachments and widely scattered, suddenly swooped down on Ciudad Rodrigo, which was invested, bombarded and stormed in less than a fortnight, and then before their adversaries had recovered from this shock, wheeled south upon Badajoz. This took more time and cost more in losses, which were heavy; but early in April, after a siege of

three weeks, the place was in Wellington's hands. Soult had been unable to make any serious attempt to save it, and Marmont could do no more than raid into the Tagus valley about Castello Branco, whence he retired in haste when Wellington turned north once more to deal with him. A pause now ensued in the operations, which the British turned to good use by surprising and destroying the Almaraz bridge over the Tagus on the most direct route between the northern and southern French armies, and considerably shortening their own corresponding lateral line by restoring the bridge at Alcantara.

Early in June, Wellington, having carefully arranged a series of subsidiary operations and demonstrations designed to contain all the French armies from Galicia in the north to Catalonia in the east, moved in force against Marmont. The latter was again widely dispersed and hurriedly concentrated his army to the rear behind the Douro in the Toro-Valladolid area. The British, after a leisurely siege of the Salamanca forts, followed him thither, but found him too strongly posted for attack. Marmont spent a fortnight awaiting reinforcements which did not come; Wellington was also waiting for news of his various subsidiary operations which had failed to materialize as he had hoped. Then the French assumed the offensive and a rapid campaign of manœuvre followed, Marmont continually overlapping and threatening to turn the British right, and forcing them to fall back to preserve their communications with Ciudad Rodrigo. So both forces came back to Salamanca, where Wellington took position and offered battle. On 22nd July, Marmont, unduly extending his left to continue his threat to his adversary's flank, was caught at a disadvantage; the British seized the opportunity to fall in full force on his detached wing, separate it from the centre, and destroy it, and the French defeat was complete. The results of the battle were far-reaching and the French had to evacuate Andalusia, Madrid, and all Spain as far east as the Ebro. By September, however, the main mass of the French armies in Spain, some 60,000 strong, was concentrated in Valencia and moved on Madrid, compelling the British right wing, 30,000 strong only under Hill, to fall back on the main army of 35,000 men, under Wellington, which had been unsuccessfully besieging Burgos. Threatened with an enveloping attack by 110,000 men against his own 70,000, Wellington ordered a retreat to the line of the Douro, but this could not be held; and a position farther to the south about Salamanca had also to be abandoned before the concentric pressure of the superior French armies, which, however, by over-caution missed a good opportunity of forcing Wellington to accept battle at a disadvantage. The British then fell back by way of Ciudad Rodrigo to winter quarters in central Portugal between the Mondego and the Tagus; the final stage of the retreat, which was attended by much indiscipline and disorder, was fortunately unmolested by the enemy. In fact, though the end of the 1812 cam-

paign saw the British back in the area from which they had started at its beginning, the French power in Spain had been seriously weakened. Their hold on Andalusia and southern Spain had been lost and their tenure of the centre made insecure, while the British Commander and his army had proved their capacity for offensive as well as for defensive action.

7. The Reconquest of Spain, May-October, 1813

This high promise was brilliantly fulfilled in the summer of 1813, when Wellington in a rapid offensive of two months shattered the French power in central Spain and drove them back in flight to the north-eastern corner of the country. Their armies, which suffered from divided and irresolute leadership, had been much depleted by drafts sent to Germany, where Napoleon was trying to reconstitute the remnants of his Grand Army after its annihilation in the disastrous Russian campaign of 1812. Nevertheless they could still muster 60,000 men on the line of the middle Douro to oppose the 80,000 with which Wellington advanced against them in May. His plan was to turn their northern flank with his left wing under Graham moving through *Tras os Montes* eastwards against Valladolid, while the main wing menaced this front from the south. Before this double threat the French abandoned in turn the line of the middle Douro and the upper Ebro and eventually stood to fight at Vitoria. Graham's strategic turning movement round their right was continued tactically on the battlefield, while the frontal attack was pressed so fiercely from the west that they were completely defeated and escaped from destruction only by the sacrifice of all their guns and baggage and a hurried retreat by way of Pampeluna to the French frontier. Here they found a rallying point behind the shelter of the Pyrenees, while Wellington's army settled down to the sieges of San Sebastian and Pampeluna.

Marshal Soult, who had now assumed command of the re-organized French forces, now undertook a counter-offensive with the object of relieving Pampeluna. Considerable initial success was achieved, the frontier passes were forced, and the offensive could be checked only at the outskirts of the fortress. Here Wellington, having collected superior forces, was able to launch a counterstroke which compelled the French to fall back in haste across the mountains to the line of the Bidassoa. Shortly afterwards, at the end of August, the fortress of San Sebastian fell at the second assault, and with the surrender of Pampeluna in October the last foothold of the French in Northern Spain was lost. Valencia and Catalonia, however, remained in their possession up to the end of the war, despite ill-managed and costly British attempts to turn them out.

8. The British Advance into Southern France, October, 1813–April, 1814

After skilfully forcing the passage of the formidable obstacle of the Bidassoa, Wellington's army found itself faced with strong mountain positions along the line of the Nivelle, which had been carefully fortified and were held by 60,000 men. Attacking with 90,000 in mid-November, the British stormed these with unexpected ease, and the beaten French retreated to new positions on the line of the Nive covering Bayonne. Wellington could only force their abandonment by throwing his right wing to the east of the river, and Soult, taking advantage of this division of his army, struck hard at the separated fraction first on the west and then on the east bank, but in vain; the British in some of the most stubborn fighting of the war tenaciously maintained their ground. A pause lasting to the end of the year was made necessary by bad weather, during which both armies were depleted, Soult for the benefit of Napoleon's main army, and Wellington's by the necessity of sending home the greater part of his Spanish troops, whose indiscipline and plundering propensities he feared would antagonize the population when he came to invade France.

In January, 1814, under pressure from his adversary on the upper Nive, Soult left Bayonne to stand a siege and drew off his main body eastward to the line of the Adour and across the successive lines of the Gaves of Oloron and Pau, giving battle unsuccessfully at Orthez. After his defeat here his eastward retreat was continued along the foot of the Pyrenees with the purpose of uniting with Suchet's forces returning from Catalonia; after crossing the Garonne, his army stood to fight the last battle of the war at Toulouse. There the British gained a precarious but fruitless victory, for Napoleon had abdicated a few days before and with his fall the war came to an end. During the course of the Peninsular War, up to that time the greatest military undertaking of her history, Britain had put into the field from 30,000 to 70,000 men, fought nineteen battles, carried out ten sieges, and killed, wounded, or captured 200,000 of the enemy; her armies had saved Portugal, reconquered Spain, and played their part in the final invasion of France which brought down Napoleon and restored peace to Europe.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER READING

Despite the voluminous literature on the Peninsular War, good brief histories are few and far between. With some diffidence the author suggests that the account in his own *Short History of the British Army* would probably serve the student's purpose as well as any other; the portion of the Hon. Sir John Fortescue's *Life of Wellington* dealing with this period would be a good alternative. Major-General Sir C. W. Robinson's *Wellington's Campaigns* is the

best of the longer histories; the classic full-length works by Napier and Sir Charles Oman are, it is to be feared, on too large a scale for the student's purpose.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. The Vimiero campaign is of considerable interest if it is regarded from its true strategic point of view as a stroke against a detachment isolated in a hostile country and cut off from support and reinforcement by the Spanish rising in its rear. Junot was thus in the position of an advanced guard which had adventured itself within reach of a superior enemy on the far side of a natural barrier since rendered impassable; but it was only the British possession of the command of the sea that exposed him to peril of attack while in this precarious situation, and thus we see strikingly exemplified the value of sea power as a basis for military operations. In this case the British expeditionary force under Wellington was like a projectile fired by a powerful gun, the gun being represented by the British navy; the projectile was admirably aimed and so well constructed as to be completely effective in destroying the target, represented by Junot's army; but had it not been for the range and power of the gun, the target would have been out of reach.

2. Moore's Corunna campaign has been the subject of much historical and strategic controversy; but it was in reality nothing more than a diversion on a large scale, daringly conceived and up to a point admirably carried out, but marred by faults of execution, and of very limited effect on the general military situation in Spain. The disastrous results of lack of information, topographical and military, and of undue reliance on unstable allies, are seen in the uncomfortable situation in which Moore suddenly found himself on his arrival at Salamanca, with his own army widely scattered, his front completely uncovered, and faced by hostile forces victorious and vastly superior in numbers. Luckily, lack of information caused the French to miss the chance of involving the British also in the Spanish defeat. Moore was thus allowed to effect a strategic surprise by his blow at their flank, and force them to turn aside from their main objective to deal with him. He timed his "tip and run" operation admirably, and got clear away with his army intact, though this success was subsequently neutralized by the precipitancy of his retreat to Corunna and its disastrous effects on the morale of his force. So far as the French were concerned, their autumn campaign of 1808 had been highly successful; they had cleared Spain of the British as well as breaking the resistance of the Spanish armies, and it was the peculiar nature of the Spanish resistance rather than the diversion made by Moore that prevented a speedy ending of the war.

3. The situation in the Peninsula at the time of Wellington's

return to command at the beginning of 1809 was one of great interest. He had 20,000 men with which to defend Portugal and co-operate in the protection of Southern Spain, the only parts of the Peninsula not yet in possession of the French, who had vastly superior numbers, were free to attack where and when they liked, and at the moment were in a position to threaten Lisbon from two directions, north and east. As Wellington saw it, his task was, for the moment, merely to keep what he held and use his limited resources to keep the war going as long as he could. Even if the French used all their available forces for an offensive against Portugal, he considered they would need 100,000 men to carry it through, and it was unlikely, in view of the general position in Spain, that they could collect this number. He hoped to be able to deal in turn with Soult and Victor, who were widely separated and hardly in a position to co-operate effectively; but he was quite clear as to the limited results he would be able to achieve. All this he saw and wrote before a shot had been fired in that year; and it all fell out as he had foreseen. For the moment the position was one of strategic stalemate; neither side was strong enough to do anything decisive, but Wellington hoped, and with reason, that time would work for the Allies.

4. The problem with which Wellington was faced in the Peninsula was one peculiarly British, and frequently met with in the military history of this country. His army, excellent though it was for its size, was very small, and it was the only one at Britain's disposal; if once lost, it could not be replaced. He had to face the fact that with its safety was probably bound up the fate of the Government and the whole question of further British participation in the war against Napoleon. He had to reduce all risks to the minimum, to avoid defeat at all costs, even if he thereby sacrificed good chances of success, which a bolder policy might have turned to good account. Yet he could not let his army be completely idle and leave the enemy to work his will in the Peninsula; he had to adopt the most active policy consistent with safety, in other words, to make the best use of the means at hand to attain his object—which was Moltke's definition of strategy.

5. In actual fact the conditions of the Peninsular War were admirably adapted to the nature and methods of a British military effort against Napoleon. The latter's forces were not large enough to act as armies of occupation for the whole of Spain and at the same time to furnish a field force adequate to drive Wellington into the sea. To collect sufficient troops for the latter purpose meant that for the time being the area from which they were drawn went back into Spanish hands, and had to be reconquered later. Moreover, the forces so collected could not be held together for long, since the French administrative system, which involved living off the country, was unequal to meet the strain. The British, on the other

hand, with sea power and all the resources of the world behind them, and operating with base magazines and organized lines of communication, were not so straitened. Under Peninsular conditions Wellington's army in fact possessed greater flexibility, power of manœuvre, mobility, and staying power than its adversaries.

6. The history of the war shows clearly how well and judiciously he exploited these advantages. He lost no chance of falling on isolated enemy forces or fortresses and dealing with them, as at Arroyo dos Molinos and Almaraz, at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz. When the French collected in force for battle, he fell back slowly before them, as in the retreat to Torres Vedras, or stood in a strong position to offer battle, as at Busaco and Sabugal, knowing that they must either decline to attack and eventually disperse for subsistence or purchase trifling success at high cost. When he saw his opportunity for a swift attack for an objective worth while, he threw in all his forces without hesitation or delay, as in the admirable campaign of 1812. Thus in the first four years he wore down the French and not only kept his own forces intact but even strengthened them, so that in the next two years he had put himself in a position to complete the task begun in 1812 and expel the French altogether from the Peninsula.

7. The Vitoria campaign must be regarded as Wellington's strategic masterpiece. He did not fear, in face of the divided state of the hostile forces, to divide his own, and dispatch Graham's corps on a toilsome and isolated march through the mountains, in order to gain the advantage of being able to turn all the successive French lines of defence and force his foe to accept battle in unfavourable tactical conditions, where defeat must be disastrous. So punctually and resolutely was this theoretically hazardous plan carried through that the French found no opportunity of turning to account this separation of his army by striking at one of his isolated columns; indeed, they remained for the greater part of the campaign in ignorance of his true plan and of where his main blow was to fall, so that they were half beaten even before battle was joined. The dangerous period, such as it was, had been passed when the British army was reunited on the north bank of the Douro after its passage had been forced; but the fruits of the strategical advantage gained by the successful opening of the campaign persisted up to its end. Wellington, of course, had the useful power of being able to shift his base from Portugal to the northern Spanish ports as soon as his advance opened up the land routes to these, so that his line of communication could be shortened just at the moment when it would otherwise have become uncomfortably lengthy. If there are any criticisms to be made of the method of this admirable and successful campaign, they are (1) that the pursuit after Vitoria was not pressed with all the vigour possible so as to cut off the isolated portions of the French army to the north and south, and

(2) that Wellington might well have risked leaving the fortresses of San Sebastian and Pampeluna untaken behind him so as to exploit the fruits of his decisive victory by launching an immediate invasion of Southern France.

8. Despite the unbroken series of British successes from July, 1813, to April, 1814, Marshal Soult should be awarded his full share of credit for his ingenious conduct of a difficult defensive campaign. Though always heavily outnumbered, and fighting with ill-trained troops of uncertain morale against the best led and most experienced hostile army in Europe, he made full tactical use of all advantages of ground, resorted to vigorous counterstrokes when he was in danger of losing the initiative, got the fullest fighting value out of his troops, and gave Wellington some of the hardest contests and most anxious moments of the whole war. Strategically he admirably fulfilled his mission of keeping Wellington's large and formidable army well away from the main theatre of operations, where Napoleon was fighting his last desperate battle for his crown and empire, so that it was never able directly to influence the course of this decisive struggle. This Soult achieved by skilful delaying action and by directing his retreat away to the flank of Wellington's direct axis of advance, so that instead of being able to push vigorously northwards, the progress of his army was slowed down and directed eastwards into an area of little strategic importance. Right up to the last at Toulouse the French Army of the south was still a force in being, of formidable fighting quality—a state of affairs which, in view of the mercurial French temperament, easily downcast by defeat, the uncertainty of his soldiers' fighting temper, and the constant superiority of Wellington's army in numbers and in quality, must be regarded as a fine military feat on the part of Marshal Soult, for which he has not always been given due credit.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

1. What advantages accrued to the British during this campaign by reason of their command of the sea?
2. How did the administrative problems of both combatants in the Peninsular War affect their strategy?
3. What are the lessons of this war with regard to the relations between allies?
4. Clausewitz speaks of the "waning power of the strategic offensive as it progresses." What do you understand by this? Give examples from the Peninsular operations.
5. Deduce from Wellington's conduct of this campaign the principal characteristics of a great commander.

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The great advantages conferred on the British Army in the Peninsula by sea power were:

- (a) The security of its communications and line of retreat, which was ensured by the fact that the British Fleet was supreme at sea.
- (b) The power to change these at need, as exemplified in Moore's operations, when, cut off by Napoleon's advance from his base at Lisbon, he was able to fall back in safety on Corunna.
- (c) The fact that an army could be landed at any point on the southern, northern, or western coasts of the Peninsula, as occasion demanded, to create a diversion, to undertake fresh operations in a new area, or to support the local Spanish forces.
- (d) The abundant sources of supplies on which the British army could draw, the resources of the whole world being placed at its disposal by the use of sea transport.
- (e) The power of rapid transport by river and sea, which was often more speedy than marching by land—*e.g.*, the sending round of Wellington's siege train from Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz by water in 1812.
- (f) The power of changing the army's base from Portugal to the northern ports of Spain at the conclusion of the Vitoria campaign which enabled Wellington to make his main line of communication shorter and more secure at the moment when it was in danger of becoming unduly extended.

2. The French, owing to their dependence for supplies on the local resources of the country occupied by them, were compelled to disperse to live; and therefore their forces were always scattered over a wide area, and could be assembled only for some emergency, and at the cost of considerable privation and of evacuating much of their previous gains, which were at once reoccupied by the local Spanish forces and could be recovered only with difficulty. Moreover, such concentrations could only be of short duration if the forces collected were not to starve. The French discipline, moreover, deteriorated by reason of the licensed brigandage and wide dispersion, which were the inevitable concomitants of their administrative methods.

The British, on the other hand, though at times they also suffered from shortage, were so fully and effectively supplied by the careful measures of Wellington and his subordinates that they could be concentrated or dispersed at will, without their subsistence being unduly affected. They could move rapidly, advance or retire, occupy ground for as long as necessary, and in fact outlast and

outmarch the French. In a word, the British administrative system was better adapted to Peninsular warfare than that of their adversaries, and conferred on them just the same advantage that the French had enjoyed in the more civilized territories in which the majority of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars had been fought.

3. The following lessons as to co-operation between allies emerge from a study of the Peninsular War:

- (a) The only really satisfactory system of control of operations is a unified command under the predominant partner, such as Wellington exercised from 1812 onwards.
- (b) Such effective unified command is normally possible only where there exists a personality whom experience has shown to be the right man for the post; in other words, one who, like Wellington after Salamanca, has been tried and proved.
- (c) Mutual jealousy and distrust are the chief obstacles to successful allied co-operation.
- (d) If disaster is to be avoided the closest liaison and exchange of information is necessary between allies—*e.g.*, Moore all but suffered disaster because his information as to his allies' position and prospects was erroneous.
- (e) 'Tact and ability to understand the partner's point of view, and readiness to give and take, can solve many apparently insuperable divergencies of opinion.
- (f) A common language is of the greatest value as an aid to community of thought and agreement.
- (g) Even after command has been unified as between allies, the differences in military methods, discipline, and morale will always be a cause of difficulty for the commander, so that we see Wellington in 1814 dispensing with the whole of his Spanish contingent before invading Southern France for fear lest their indiscipline and propensity to plundering should antagonize the population and cause it to withhold supplies or undertake reprisals.

4. As an army on the offensive progresses into the heart of a hostile country, it is bound to weaken itself, partly by detachments left behind to guard posts, bridges, depots, etc.; partly owing to casualties by sickness, and straggling, quite apart from losses in battle; partly also by reason of the increased length of time necessary to replace these deductions from its strength owing to the greater distance between the invading army and its base. Thus, the farther the army advances the weaker becomes its numerical strength and the more its power wanes. This phenomenon is well exemplified in the case of Massena's invasion of Portugal in 1810, when the force at his disposal, from being considerably superior to

that of Wellington at the start, declined so greatly from the various causes above mentioned that by the time he arrived before the lines of Torres Vedras it was actually considerably outnumbered. The same experience was felt by the British in their turn in 1812, when, despite the great victory at Salamanca, they were too weak to consolidate their gains in Spain, and had once more to retire into Portugal. An army on the defensive which fails to gain an early and decisive victory will usually find itself unable to maintain its original momentum, and will be forced sooner or later to yield up its gains—always provided that its adversary is resolute enough not to allow himself to be intimidated into prematurely giving up the struggle.

On the other hand, in the Vitoria campaign, Wellington was able to bring the French to battle and decisively defeat them while the momentum of his advances was still unchecked. The waning of the power of the offensive made itself felt only later by depriving him of the full fruits of his victory.

5. The chief characteristics which made Wellington the great commander he was were:

- (a) His sense of realities, which prevented him ever committing what Napoleon called the worst fault in a general, making pictures of a situation out of his imagination. His grasp of a position was clear and comprehensive, and his lucid common sense enabled him to know just what he could or could not attempt with the resources at his disposal.
- (b) His broad outlook, which embraced a whole theatre of war, all the factors, physical, moral and topographical, of a problem, and the future as well as the present.
- (c) His realization of the importance of administrative factors and his constant personal attention to problems of this nature, which made the British army in the Peninsula the best fed and best provided force in Europe.
- (d) His power of seeing and seizing the fleeting opportunity, so well exemplified at Salamanca, which showed him to be as great a master of the offensive as of the defensive form of war.
- (e) His eye for ground, which enabled him to select so many highly defensible and even unassailable positions.
- (f) His appreciation of the character of the French commanders and troops, which won for him the reputation of knowing better than any other man of his time "what was on the other side of the hill."
- (g) His serenity of mind and strength of character, which enabled him to rise superior to, rather than be controlled by, fortune, whether favourable or unfavourable.

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, 1861-1865

I. THE OPERATIONS

THE military course of the American Civil War, which may be considered as a siege of the fortress formed by the Southern States on the part of the superior forces of the North, falls conveniently into four phases, as follows:

- (1) The Investment of the Fortress, 1861.
- (2) The Seizure of the Foremost Lines, 1862.
- (3) The Breach Effected, 1863.
- (4) The Assault and Fall of the Fortress, 1864-5.

1. The Investment of the Fortress, 1861

In the spring of 1861 the widening disagreement between the industrial and commercial Northern States of America and the slave-holding agricultural Southern States over slavery and the right of individual States to secede from the Union at will culminated, consequent on the election of Lincoln to the Presidency, in the withdrawal of eleven States and their formation into a new Southern Confederacy, with Richmond as its capital. The bombardment and capture by the rebels of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbour marked the opening of a war to restore the shattered Union.

Materially the belligerents were unequally matched, the South comprising only about a third of the manpower of the country, and being also inferior in financial, economic, and transport resources. Neither side had any army worthy of the name; and, though the Southern population were on the whole somewhat better fighting material than their adversaries, and had the pick of the small supply of trained officers, their armament and equipment were from the first inferior. Moreover, the adhesion of the navy to the Northern side in the early days of the war cut off the South from the outside world, preventing the export of cotton, the main source of her wealth, and the import of all war material. Thus from the first the South was in the position of a besieged fortress, and the military task of the North was the reduction of the resistance of that fortress by the pressure of the superior resources at her command.

The summer and autumn months of 1861 saw the completion of the investing lines, at sea by the navy, which established an effective blockade of the coasts, and on land by the establishment of the newly raised Federal armies on the borders of Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee, which formed the Confederacy's northern

frontier. An attempt to put a speedy end to the contest by an advance on Richmond, the Confederate capital, was defeated at Bull Run, but as against this the North could set the gain of two important outworks on either flank of the long line of battle, in the east the mountainous western area of Virginia, in the west the greater part of the State of Missouri. Both of these by the beginning of 1862 were practically in her hands, and everything was ready for a general advance all along the front against the enemy's foremost line of defence.

2. The Seizure of the Foremost Lines, 1862

The story of the next twelve months was one of stalemate on the eastern front, but of steady and important Northern gains in the west. McClellan, the Federal commander in Virginia, attempted to avoid the topographical and material difficulties of the direct route to Richmond by shipping his army to Yorktown and advancing on the capital from there; but part of his expected reinforcements were detained to cover Washington by reason of Jackson's diversion in the Shenandoah Valley; and eventually he was forced by the Confederate counter-offensive under Lee to fall back to his transports. Before all his army could be re-embarked, Lee turned north, attacked and defeated the forces left in Northern Virginia under Pope, and was in a position to invade Federal territory. In September the Confederates entered Maryland, but were too weak to maintain themselves there; after an indecisive battle at Antietam, they recrossed the Potomac back into Virginia, where at the end of the year they established themselves behind the Rappahannock and successfully beat off a Federal attack at Fredericksburg. In the east, therefore, the year ended with both sides in much the same positions as they had occupied at the beginning.

In the west, on the other hand, the Federals had made steady progress. The Confederates' first line of defence, running through mid-Kentucky to the Mississippi at Columbus, was broken through by a series of attacks carried out by the army and river flotillas acting in conjunction, and they were forced back to the line of the Chattanooga-Memphis railway. This also, after the Federal victory gained by Grant at Shiloh, had to be abandoned, and by midsummer the North stood established in the northern portion of Mississippi and Alabama, had cleared the middle course of the great river as far as Vicksburg, and had also possessed themselves of its mouth at New Orleans. Bragg, the Confederate commander, conducted a counter-offensive into Kentucky to recover the lost ground, but was headed off before reaching the Ohio and forced to retrace his steps; the Federal left wing under Rosecrans, following him up, drove him south of Nashville and Murfreesborough; and, though Grant's attempts with the right wing to secure Vicksburg

and complete the occupation of the Mississippi were for the moment unsuccessful, the year closed with rosy prospects for the Northern cause. Federal armies everywhere stood well within the South's most northern important frontier, and her most important lateral railway and the greater part of her most vital river artery were in Federal hands.

3. The Breach Effected, 1863

In 1863 the balance swung definitely against the Confederates, whose defeat by the end of the year was clearly seen to be only a matter of time. In the east, Lee, after brilliantly repulsing a renewed Federal attack at Chancellorsville—a victory robbed of much of its value by the loss of his great lieutenant, Jackson—once more crossed the Potomac and entered hostile territory. He suffered defeat, however, in a three-day battle at Gettysburg early in July, and was forced to retreat, and, though the remainder of the year saw nothing but minor operations in Virginia, the very fact of the Confederacy's inability to force a decision in this theatre enhanced the importance of the Federal progress in the west.

Here, after completing his preparations in the spring, Grant on the Northern right wing carried his army by river past the Vicksburg batteries, effected a landing on the eastern bank of the Mississippi below the city, and, cutting loose from his base, circled round to north and west, drove off the Confederate field army, and laid siege to the place. It fell on 4th July, the same day as saw Lee's repulse in the east at Gettysburg; its loss gave the North control of the whole Mississippi, cut the Confederacy in two, and completed her investment on her only open side. In August, Rosecrans on the Federal left also advanced and forced Bragg out of the important towns of Chattanooga and Knoxville, but, defeated in a fierce two-day fight at Chickamauga, he was forced back to the former place, and there shut in. Grant, now put in chief command in the west, hurried up with reinforcements to restore the position; Bragg, who had weakened himself by sending a detachment to recover Knoxville, was at once attacked, and decisively beaten. This, Grant's last and greatest victory in the west, placed the North in a position to turn the whole western flank of the Confederacy, break round the Alleghany Mountains into her central States, and take her eastern armies in flank and rear.

4. The Assault and Fall of the Fortress, 1864-5

The task of completing the overthrow of the South was entrusted to Grant, as commander-in-chief of all the Federal forces, and, handing over command in the west to Sherman, he himself proceeded east to take charge of the operations in Virginia. There ensued a fierce duel with Lee, who was gradually driven back by force of numbers, though still covering Richmond, to Petersburg,

where he was invested: the front was then stabilized in entrenched lines, which the Confederates maintained intact till the spring of 1865.

In the west the tide of Federal success had meanwhile reached the flood. Sherman, moving south-east from Chattanooga, made slow progress against Johnston's skilful defence, but by the end of the summer Atlanta was in his hands, and the new Confederate commander, Hood, had been driven to seek a desperate remedy for a desperate situation in the shape of a counter-offensive into Tennessee. Sherman resolved to leave part of his force under Thomas to deal with him, and with the rest to cut loose from his base and strike through Georgia for the sea. Success attended him throughout; in December the North heard that Thomas had utterly defeated Hood at Nashville and that Sherman had reached the Atlantic shore at Savannah unopposed.

Four months of 1865 saw the Confederacy's hopeless struggle at an end. Sherman struck up north-east through the Carolinas to clear the area between him and Grant; but before he could arrive, the latter at last forced his way through the attenuated hostile lines at Petersburg and compelled his adversary to abandon Richmond and break west for Lynchburg. On its way thither, Lee's tiny remnant was headed off and forced to capitulate at Appomattox; the remnants of the other Southern forces soon followed suit; and by May the four years' Civil War was at an end and the United States once more, and finally, reunited.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER READING

Admirable brief accounts of the American Civil War are to be found in F. L. Paxson's volume in the Home University Library and G. C. Lee's *True History of the Civil War*. Of the longer histories, that by W. B. Wood and General Edmonds still remains the best available. Those who desire to pursue their studies farther might do so with pleasure as well as profit by reading, if they have not already done so, four excellent biographies: Henderson's *Stonewall Jackson* and General Maurice's *Lee*, for the eastern theatre; and General Fuller's *Grant* and Liddell Hart's *Sherman* for the war in the west.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. The scale on which the American Civil War was waged is perhaps its most striking feature; "No previous war," write Mr. Wood and General Edmonds, "has ever in the same time entailed upon the combatants such enormous sacrifices of life and wealth." The belligerents suffered between them something like a million casualties, and the North's daily war bill came to about £500,000. "The conquest of such a vast expanse of territory" (as the South) "held by a nation in arms has," they go on to say, "no parallel in

history." In fact, the Civil War was in truth a war of nations—the first and, until 1914, the only true national conflict of its kind; and two World Wars have since come to confirm the lesson that the resistance of a nation in arms is measured, not in months but in years. Under the circumstances, it is quite astonishing to see the joint authors above quoted agreeing with Lord Wolseley that "had the United States in 1861 been able to put into the field one army corps of regular troops, the war would quickly have ended." These World Wars have taught us that there is a point beyond which the best of training, the finest discipline, the widest war experience, and the highest perfection of armament cannot counter-balance the dead weight of enormously superior numbers; and that, so far as history shows, the only really effective weapon against a brave and determined people in arms is the slow but sure process of attrition, which in the end, costly and bitter as it must be, reduces its powers of resistance below what is necessary for the continuance of the struggle.

2. The conditions of the war made it necessary for the North to supplement her inadequate military means of action by others less spectacular but more powerful. Her own material resources were, in any case, vastly superior to those at her adversary's disposal, but the balance in her favour was still further tipped by the crippling effect exercised on the South by the sea blockade and by diplomatic means. The food supply of the South was adequate and never failed in quantity, though it declined much in quality, throughout the four years of war; but man cannot live, nor armies fight, on bread alone, and for the supply of almost everything else an army needs she depended on outside resources from which the blockade cut her off. Moreover, for the provision of the funds wherewith to purchase the necessary war materials she relied on the proceeds from the export of her cotton crop, and this export, too, was entirely precluded.

Her rulers had anticipated that this of itself must lead to intervention or at least recognition by those European powers, especially Great Britain, who was particularly interested in the manufacture of cotton goods; but in this expectation, thanks largely to the skilful diplomacy of their adversaries, they were deceived. The South, cut off from all intercourse with the outside world, thus became in fact an invested fortress, and, moreover, one ill-provided with the material resources necessary to stand a prolonged siege; so that its fall could be only a matter of time.

3. That it was able to hold out for over four whole years was due in part to the immensity of the task before the North, in part to the mistakes made by the latter in the conduct of the war, and in part to the skill of the Southern commanders and the heroism of the Southern army and people—though these last-named qualities were not so universally displayed as the traditional view of the war

would have us believe. But one very powerful factor contributing to the long delay in obtaining a decision was the great superiority of the defensive over the offensive form of war in the peculiar conditions prevailing on the American battlefields. The defensive is always the strongest form of war, though its results are usually negative; but the strength of infantry on the defensive had for the time being been increased by new developments in its weapons, with which those of the artillery had not kept pace, as well as by the practice of hasty entrenchments, and by the undeveloped state of the country which was the scene of operations. The attack could rely for success only on very greatly superior numbers, and even then not with any certainty; and thus the war dragged on its slow length, from year to year, because the assailants could not win decisive victories, and the successes of the defenders served only to prolong the contest and postpone the issue.

4. In a struggle where both belligerents were utterly inexperienced in warlike affairs, it was inevitable that the respective provinces of policy and strategy should be ill-defined, and that the story of the war should teem with examples of statesmen trying to control headstrong soldiers, and soldiers chafing under the interference of statesmen. Both statesmen and soldiers were right—and wrong. Lincoln, once regarded as a classic example of a meddling politician, is now seen in a juster light, as having been fully right, when, for instance, he insisted that from the point of view of high policy it was essential to preserve Washington from capture, even if a chance of taking Richmond was thereby sacrificed. The logic of facts, too, proves him to have been as well justified in distrusting McClellan, who wanted the spur, and Hooker, who wanted the curb, as in giving his complete confidence to Grant and Sherman, once they had shown themselves in need of neither. On the other hand, if Lincoln may seem sometimes to have endangered his cause through ignorance, the Confederate President, Davis, endangered his yet more by a perilous "little knowledge," and failed thereby to get the best value out of his great generals, Lee and Johnston and others. Lincoln had to take too much upon him by reason of the insufficiency of his generals; Davis had not that excuse, and his was the less justifiable and the more fatal error.

5. One cardinal error of the Confederacy was that it appeared to consider defensive strategy a necessary corollary of defensive policy. The Confederacy professed the view that the States in seceding had but exercised their undoubted legal and constitutional rights, and that in resisting the North's attempt to bring them back by force into the Union, they were defending themselves against an unprovoked and illegal aggression. But to argue from this political thesis that the military strategy of the Confederacy should therefore necessarily be defensive also was a fatal lapse of logic and good sense. In a long war the South was bound to be outmatched and borne

down, unless she could first break the hostile will to win. But this was a positive result which could be achieved only by a positive (that is an offensive) strategy. For such a strategy it was necessary to follow Napoleon's recipe for beating large armies with small ones and to concentrate one's own forces, induce the enemy to disperse his, and so obtain superiority at the right time and place. But this course the Confederate Government had either not sufficient wisdom to perceive, or not strong enough resolution to execute, although it was frequently urged upon them by their military advisers. They preferred to trust to wearing out the patience and determination of their enemies—which they seriously underestimated—and to gamble on outside intervention—a vain hope. By this choice they threw away their one chance—admittedly a slender one—of bringing victory to their cause.

6. Attention in this country, up till a very few years ago, has been focused, as regards the military events of the Civil War, mainly on the eastern theatre. Yet it was in the west that the war was lost and won; and, attractive as must be the great personalities of men like Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson, the oft-told story of their achievements in Virginia has caused an undue neglect of feats of arms as meritorious in themselves, and infinitely more decisive in their results, which were accomplished on the west side of the Alleghanies. As regards strategy, the general course of war seems powerfully to support the thesis known as that of the indirect approach—or "the longest way round is the shortest way home." Whatever may have been the basis of the Federal grand strategy—if it had any definite basis other than the somewhat elementary one of attack all along the line—in the event the operations in the east were a series of mere holding attacks, retaining in front of them a portion of the Southern forces, while the true decisive blow was delivered in the west. In a word, the east became the secondary, the west the main theatre; and since one principal object of military history is to discover for future application the causes of victory and defeat in the past, the student of the Civil War will be well advised to devote his main attention to the western campaigns, where the issue of victory and defeat was decided.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE WAR

1. To what main causes do you ascribe the comparative success of the Confederates up to the death of "Stonewall" Jackson, despite their inferiority in numbers and resources? Can you draw any general conclusions as to the possibility of a weaker state successfully resisting a stronger power?

2. "There must exist unity of direction and control of the armed forces. This is exercised by the Ministers of State who have executive responsibility for the conduct of the war." (F.S.R., I, 3.) Discuss this dictum in the light of the events of the American Civil War.

3. It has been said that "The American Civil War was the first of modern wars, as we understand the term today." For what changes and developments in the art of war was it peculiarly noteworthy?

4. "It is by the simultaneous and combined action of all its means of persuasion that a nation achieves its object—the subjection of the opponent's will." (F.S.R. II, 2.) What light on the use of this combined action is thrown by the events of the Civil War?

5. "A cavalry raid . . . is permissible only when it is certain that its effect on the main operation would be greater than would be produced by retaining the force in hand for co-operation in the battle." (Cavalry Training II, 1, 8.) What lessons as to the use and value of cavalry raids do you consider arise from the history of this war?

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The chief causes of the early Confederate successes were in the east the ascendancy established by Lee and his army, whose morale and standard of leadership stood high; while in the west, though the advantage on the whole lay with the Federals, they had not been able fully to exploit their advantage of superior numbers, and their leaders, first-class men in the making, were still learning their work. Later the improvement in the Federal command and staff work in the east placed them more on an equality with their adversaries; the troops had been hardened by years of war, and Grant could practise a war of attrition with superior numbers and resources, and hold fast the dwindling forces of Lee, while the western armies pushed home their new secure advantage with decisive results. Minor causes favouring the Confederates in the first phase of the war were the dissipation of the Northern forces, due to lack of an effective control and direction, and the difficulties of the country, which favoured the defensive.

It may be concluded that in war the fighting superiority of one army over another may enable a weak state to hold its own for a time against a stronger adversary, but such superiority can be turned to decisive advantage only if the fleeting period of its duration can be quickly utilized to win a decisive victory in the field. Otherwise the numerical and material factors will in the end wear down the weaker side, and give the final decision to the stronger power.

2. The boundary between legitimate and undue influence on strategy by policy can never be absolutely defined. Such great authorities as Lord Wolseley and Colonel Henderson can be quoted to show that Lincoln in the first years of the war interfered excessively with his generals in the east—a view diametrically opposed to that recently expressed by General Maurice and General Ballard. All are agreed that later in the war the Northern President

found it possible and far more satisfactory to leave Grant an almost entirely free hand; but Grant had proved himself of a different calibre from any of his predecessors. It seems difficult to deduce more from the practice on the Federal side than that the statesman's duty of direction and control must be exercised in accordance with the personalities and the circumstances of the moment, and that his hand can be more loosely on the reins when the military command has proved itself fit to be trusted. This lesson Davis on the Southern side never learned; with him each commander was kept strictly to his own area, and the general direction of the war, exercised by the President in person, suffered from short-sightedness of outlook and lack of decision. Thus in the case of the South it was the general direction of the operations, in the case of the North the details of particular operations, that suffered from civilian errors; and the former were the more serious in their consequences than the latter.

3. The following new developments in military methods, devised or perfected during the American Civil War, go to substantiate its claim to be the first of modern wars:

- (a) It was a true war of nations, in which for the first time in history the whole financial, material, and moral resources of both belligerents were whole-heartedly devoted to the task of ensuring victory in arms.
- (b) Modern ironclad ships-of-war first made their appearance in naval action.
- (c) Railways began to play a predominant part both as lines of communication and for purposes of troop transport.
- (d) Both sides possessed modern fire-arms, though the North had the advantage in this as in every other material respect over her adversary.
- (e) The telegraph came to facilitate information and inter-communication in the field.
- (f) Field fortification on a large scale regained an importance which for a century and a half it had lost, but which was now to grow until in another fifty years it dominated every battlefield of the First World War.
- (g) Economic rather than military factors dominated the situation and powerfully influenced the result as they are bound to do in every war of modern nations.

4. The pressure of the Federal armies alone could never have compelled the South to lay down her arms. It was the strict blockade of her coast by the navy that deprived her to an ever-increasing degree of the material means of carrying on the war, and gradually reduced her powers of resistance to inadequacy. "Uncle Sam's webbed feet have been and made their tracks wherever the ground was a little damp," said Lincoln; and besides

its excellent work at sea, the United States navy powerfully co-operated with the land forces in combined attacks against the ports and coast-line of the South, and in joint operations along the borders of the great rivers which traverse her territory. Naval assistance thus greatly reinforced the power of the land forces and laid a strangle-hold on the Confederacy from which she never got free.

To this was added the weight of political pressure, which denied the rebel Confederacy the rights of a belligerent, prevented the recognition by neutral powers which might have enabled her to claim and enforce these rights, enlisted the sympathy of the civilized world for the Northern cause by the proclamation of the abolition of slavery, and sowed disunion in the South by recognizing and receiving back into the Union with full status all Southern territory which dissociated itself from the cause of the secession.

5. The great cavalry raids of the war took place, not in the limited confines of the eastern theatre, but in the great spaces of the west, where Forrest, Morgan and Wheeler for the Confederates, and Grierson and Wilson for the North, rode far and wide into hostile territory, burning, capturing or destroying whatever they found of value to the enemy. These exploits were, in fact, of the utmost value to their side; the raid on Grant's depot at Holly Springs in December, 1862, held up the Federal advance in the Mississippi Valley for six months; Forrest's attacks on Sherman's communications north of Atlanta in the autumn of 1864 were among the primary causes which led that general to undertake the risky expedient of the march through Georgia. Where the commanders on both sides lie open to criticism is that they seldom attempted to combine those large-scale raids with decisive operations by the main armies; their raids were isolated expedients to gain time, or worry and distract the enemy, not parts of a great co-ordinated plan for his defeat and destruction. In certain cases, moreover, such as that of Stuart's raid before Gettysburg and Stoneman's before Chancellorsville, they had the effect of depriving the army at a critical moment of its eyes and ears. Wilson's raid to Selma in 1865 is the only great example of a raid carried out as part of a large-scale combined plan, and its success and far-reaching effects show what might have been made of earlier opportunities.

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904 (TO THE BATTLE OF LIAO-YANG INCLUSIVE)

I. BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE OPERATIONS

THE early operations of the war between Russia and Japan comprised:

- (1) The Japanese Invasion of Korea and Manchuria, 9th February to 31st May.
- (2) The Advance to Liao-Yang, 1st June to 23rd August.
- (3) The Indecisive Battle of Liao-Yang, 24th August to 4th September.

1. The Japanese Invasion of Korea and Manchuria, 9th February-31st May

Early in February, 1904, the long-drawn-out discussions between Russia and Japan as to the former power's withdrawal from the Chinese province of Manchuria, which she had occupied under lease for fifteen years, and which in her hands Japan regarded as a threat to her national security, culminated in a break of diplomatic relations. The declaration of war by Japan was actually preceded by attacks by her fleet on the vessels of the Russian Pacific squadron in the harbours of Port Arthur and Chemulpo; these were so far successful as to render it possible for the transport of the Japanese army across the Korean Straits to Korea and Manchuria to be commenced in safety.

The numerical superiority of the Japanese in this first phase of the war was considerable; they had available and ready for embarkation overseas some 260,000 men as against their adversary's 120,000; these latter were widely dispersed over the whole of Manchuria, and owing to the great length of the communications with European Russia by the Trans-Siberian railway, reinforcements could be brought up but slowly. On the other hand, the difficult nature of the terrain and the scarcity of roads were bound to render a Japanese advance slow and laborious, and considerably to hamper their power of manœuvre. Conditions, therefore, favoured a policy of delay on the part of the Russian commander, Kuropatkin, until sufficient forces should be assembled to give him a numerical superiority for a decisive battle; but this policy involved the risk of the loss of the Russian harbours, particularly of Port Arthur, and of the fleet which had taken shelter within it, and such a loss, equally disastrous from the political and military point of view, could not lightly be faced. These conflicting considerations from the first exercised an unfortunate effect on Russian strategy.

The Japanese commander, Oyama, also had no easy problem to solve. It was important for the security both of the homeland and of the sea-communications of the army to destroy the Russian fleet and get possession of Port Arthur as soon as possible; but it was also important to defeat the Russian army in Manchuria while the advantage of numbers still lay with the Japanese. He decided that he was sufficiently strong to pursue both objects simultaneously; and in February the first step was taken by landing the Japanese First Army (Kuroki) in the harbours of Western and Southern Korea and pushing it forward to the northern frontier of that country along the Yalu, where the Russian Eastern Detachment stood to deliver battle. It was not till 1st May that the Battle of the Yalu, the first action of the war, took place; Kuroki, who enjoyed a two-to-one superiority in numbers, crossed the river and forced the enemy to seek refuge behind the barrier of the Fenshuiling Range, but was himself compelled, for reasons of supply, to halt at Feng-Huang-Cheng, where he remained for two months before he was in a position to recommence his advance.

Immediately after the Battle of the Yalu, the Russian fleet in Port Arthur remaining inactive, a new Japanese army, the Second (Oku), was transported to the Manchurian coast to land at Pitzuwo, and move direct on Port Arthur. By mid-May it had cut the communications of the fortress to the north; on 26th May the Russian covering force was driven, after fierce fighting, from its strong position at Nanshan, and the isolation of Port Arthur was a *fait accompli*. Nodzu's Fourth Japanese Army was now set ashore at Takushan; and, while the Third Army (under Nogi) undertook the siege of Port Arthur, Oku turned about to take position behind the Tashaho to cover that operation from the north. The Russians, whose field strength had now increased to some 100,000 men, thus found themselves faced by about the same number of Japanese deployed on a wide semi-circular front of 200 miles from Aiyang Cheng by Feng-Huang-Cheng, Takushan, and Pitzuwo to Pulantien, with a force blockading Port Arthur.

2. The Concentric Advance to Liao-Yang, 1st June-23rd August

Political pressure was now brought to bear on Kuropatkin to make an attempt to bring some temporary relief at least to the beleaguered fortress; and though, overestimating the hostile forces before him, he considered that he was not yet in a situation to assume any effective offensive, he allowed himself to be persuaded to dispatch an isolated corps southwards from Kaiping to do what it could. At the same time all the Japanese armies were set in movement northwards, Kuroki on the right via the Mandarin Road, Oku up the railway, Nodzu in the wide gap between them, all in the general convergent direction of Liao-Yang. Oku's advance

brought him at once into contact with the Russian corps, which was defeated and driven back in an encounter battle at Telissu; the other armies met only isolated observation detachments, but the physical difficulties of bad roads and mountainous country considerably hindered their progress. In front of Nodzu and Kuroki the Russians inexplicably failed even to defend the strong mountain barrier of the Fenshuiling; and by the end of June the Japanese right and centre ran along the crests of that range, while their left was just south of Kaiping. Their front had thus been reduced in length from 200 to little over 100 miles, and half the distance to their projected point of concentration had been covered without any serious action; but the dispersion of their forces, still perilously wide, offered to Kuropatkin an admirable chance of massing superior numbers on one wing or the other to defeat them in detail.

This chance, however, he failed to seize; an attack in force against Kuroki was indeed projected, but came to nothing; and the Russians confined themselves to a series of partial actions on both fronts, designed merely to delay as long as possible the arrival of the enemy before Liao-Yang, where all preparations were being hurried forward for the decisive battle. The Japanese advance, despite temporary checks, therefore continued uninterruptedly, if slowly; on the right wing Kuroki, on 31st July, dealt successfully with an ill-co-ordinated Russian attempt at a counter-offensive in the mountains and pushed on to the line of the Lan Ho; in the centre Nodzu took possession of Hsi-Mu-Cheng and gained touch with Oku, who, advancing along the railway, had, after a fierce action at Tashihchiao, secured Hai-Cheng and pushed out a detachment on his left to secure Ying-Kou, a most useful secondary base. Meanwhile, in the south, the investment of Port Arthur and the Russian fleet in the harbour had been completed by Nogi's Third Japanese Army, and the garrison had been driven within its defences; but the first attempt to take the place by assault failed. At this juncture the coming of the rains caused a compulsory pause in the operations of three weeks, prior to the opening of the great pitched battle at Liao-Yang, from which both sides hoped for a decision.

3. The Indecisive Battle of Liao-Yang, 24th August-4th September

The forces present numbered on the Japanese side 130,000 with some 500 guns, on the Russian 150,000 men with some 700 guns, and, though the lavish use of protective flank detachments had somewhat reduced the Russian numerical superiority, this was compensated for by the three successive lines of powerful entrenchments they had erected to cover Liao-Yang to south and east. Nevertheless, on 26th August Oyama's armies moved forward to attack the hostile advanced position running from Ashan Chan on the railway to Anping and along the east bank of the Tangho.

On the left Oku's and Nodzu's armies could make no impression on the defence, and on the left and centre of Kuroki's front also the Japanese had the worst of the day; but a mere local success on his right had such far-reaching effects that the whole Russian line by superior order evacuated its positions and its works and drew back to the second line, from Shoushanpu in the west to the confluence of the Tangho and the Taitzuho on the east, with a strong detachment north of the latter river. After three days' preparation, the Japanese commenced their attacks on this new position on 30th August. Again little or no success rewarded the efforts of their centre and left, or indeed at any point south of the Taitzuho, either on this or the succeeding day; but Kuroki, erroneously believing that he saw signs of an impending hostile retreat, crossed to the north bank of that river with half his army, and began to move westwards against the Russian communications leading north of Mukden. This bold move, the peril of which loomed over-large in the mind of the Russian commander, induced him to retire the right and centre of his army once more into the inner line of works on the outskirts of the city and endeavour to free his threatened left and rear by a vigorous counter-offensive with all the troops he could make available; these latter in actual fact considerably outnumbered the Japanese on the north bank of the Taitzuho. On 1st and 2nd September the issue was fought out round the little hill of Manju Yama, both sides assuming the offensive; the Japanese could make no headway, but the Russian attacks, ill-conducted and unskillfully managed, shattered themselves in succession against the hostile resistance; and on the morning of the 3rd Kuropatkin, seeing no hope of success, gave up the struggle and issued orders for a retreat on Mukden. The Japanese were too exhausted to do more than follow up the retiring enemy at a safe distance, and the whole Russian army effected its withdrawal without serious molestation. The Japanese victory, morally indeed of great importance and value, was thus barren of material results, and the war continued its course.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

The most recent and best short book on this part of the Russo-Japanese War is General Rowan Robinson's *Campaign of Liao-Yang*. To this may be added General Bird's little monograph on the battle, a valuable piece of criticism. Of the larger works the most readable and thought-provoking is Colonel Cordonnier's critical study, *The Japanese in Manchuria*, though there are considerable gaps in the narrative of events. The official histories, British and Russian, will be found too lengthy for the student's purpose; but the critical comments in the former should at least be glanced at, as also may General Sir Ian Hamilton's fascinating *Staff Officer's Scrap Book*.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS ON INTEREST

1. The strategical problem before the Japanese High Command, and the solution arrived at, has been outlined in the preceding narrative. The critical verdicts upon this solution have varied greatly. It is maintained in some quarters that Japan's simultaneous pursuit of a double objective, the reduction of Port Arthur and defeat of the Russian field army, was contrary to the sound practice of war and had the effect of preventing her from securing decisive preponderance of force, either before Port Arthur or in the field. Other commentators consider that in the circumstances of the situation, at any rate as it presented itself to the eyes of the Japanese High Command at the time, the pursuit of two simultaneous objectives was demanded and justified. Had it been possible to foresee the future—the unexpectedly prolonged resistance of Port Arthur, the indecisive result of the fighting in the field—Japan would no doubt have contented herself either with devoting her main effort to defeating Kuropatkin while merely masking the fortress and reducing it by starvation, or with making the capture of Port Arthur her first consideration and holding the Russian field army at arm's length till this had been achieved. But to foresee the future accurately is given to no man and no commander, and the Japanese from the first deliberately elected to play for both objectives at once. Events may be said to have justified them, for in fact Port Arthur fell to their arms in due course, and, though Kuropatkin succeeded in avoiding any decisive defeat in the field, his adversaries finally attained the political object for which the war had been fought—the expulsion of Russia from Manchuria.

2. The Russian strategy in the opening phase of the campaign, on the other hand, was strictly correct and in full accord with the principles of war. For the state of ill-preparedness in which the outbreak of hostilities surprised Kuropatkin, the political authorities rather than he himself must bear the responsibility; but, given the position as it actually was, the Russian commander could do no other than adopt a waiting attitude, until the slow accumulation of the superior resources which time must place at his disposal should enable him to take the initiative and assume the offensive. The time necessary for this he estimated accurately enough at six months from the outbreak of the war; to gain this time he had to rely on a combination of space and resisting power. He had to select the area for the eventual concentration of his army as far forward as possible, so as to avoid any unnecessary sacrifice of valuable ground which it might prove no easy matter later to regain, yet not so far forward as to expose him to the risk of defeat in detail before that concentration could be effected. His selection of the Liao-Yang area was also justified by the event, for here, at the end of the period allowed for by him, he was able to deliver battle with numerical superiority on his

side. In a word, from the purely strategic point of view, Kuropatkin's line of action in this phase of the war was correct and successful; it was not as a strategist but as a tactician and leader that he proved unequal to his task.

3. The problem that faced the Japanese, once their armies had safely gained their footing on the mainland, was principally one of supply and communications. Seldom could the truth of the old maxim, that an army marches on its belly, have been better exemplified. The rate of progress of the various columns from their disembarkation area to their final concentration area before Liao-Yang averaged under two miles a day, and this apparent slowness was caused far less by the Russian resistance than by the paucity and poorness of the roads, the barren and difficult nature of the country, and the immense difficulty of feeding and maintaining the armies during the advance. Similarly the layout of such few routes of advance and communication as existed tied the Japanese down to that perilous method of separate columns on a wide front without possibility of mutual support, which afforded Kuropatkin more than one opening for effectively playing Napoleon's favourite game of manœuvre from a central position. These openings, fortunately for the Japanese, he neither saw sufficiently clearly nor had force and determination enough to take advantage of. In war, as the practice of both sides showed, one too often does what one can, rather than what one would and should.

4. The tactical conduct of the various delaying actions fought by the Russians in the period from May to August, 1904, affords considerable grounds for criticism. At the Yalu a foolish attempt appears to have been made to resist the Japanese First Army with a force less than half its strength, and a disaster was only averted by the inexplicable failure of the victors to exploit their first success. At Telissu, where admittedly the Russian commander had a difficult, if not impossible, task to fulfil, the failure was due rather to lack of co-ordination of effort, bad staff work, and indifferent leadership; the disproportion of forces was not great, and an opportunity was lost of inflicting a serious repulse on the enemy. At Tashihchiao the delaying force admirably fulfilled its task, and the subsequent retirement, though perhaps premature, was in accordance with superior policy and orders. The blunder made in the unnecessary evacuation of the Fenshuiling passes by the Eastern Detachment can be accounted for only by faulty information and an overestimate of the hostile strength; and the subsequent unsuccessful offensive to regain the favourable ground so needlessly surrendered was not its only evil result. None the less, it must be admitted that, despite errors of detail, the Russian delaying detachments succeeded, not entirely by their own efforts, in fulfilling their mission, which was to prevent the arrival of the Japanese at Liao-Yang before the concentration of superior Russian forces there had been effected.

5. It cannot be denied that on the eve of the opening of what both sides intended to be the decisive battle of Liao-Yang, the balance of advantage lay in appearance with the Russians, who had more men and guns and a position prepared and reconnoitred, and were still in a position to make use of interior lines against hostile forces not yet effectively concentrated. Unfortunately the Russian army proved itself on the battlefield definitely inferior as a fighting machine to that of its adversaries. The Russian soldier, solid and stolid as ever when in his trenches, was out-mancœuvred and out-fought once he emerged into the open; the subordinate leadership was uninspired, irresolute and unskillful; and the morale, already somewhat affected by the past six months of unbroken defeat and retreat, was further impaired by what must have seemed the unnecessary abandonment one after another of the formidable lines of defence on which so much labour had been expended. So when the chance and the moment came for the decisive counter-offensive, without which no victory for an army on the defensive is possible, Kuropatkin's weapon broke in his hand as he was about to wield it. The sudden culmination of all his fears and collapse of all his hopes thus caused him to throw up the game, and issue the order for a general retreat, the justification of which we may vainly seek in the actual or apparent tactical situation and relation of physical forces, and can be found in moral considerations alone.

6. In this battle the Japanese troops and subordinate leaders rode off with the honours of the day. Their superior commanders showed considerable qualities of character and leadership; but the general plan on which the battle was to have been fought went awry from the first; the planned, envelopment of the Russian right was not achieved, and Kuroki's thrust on the opposite wing was based on a misreading of the position, which made it an act of rashness rather than of reasonable boldness. But all this was redeemed by the magnificent fighting qualities of the rank and file and of the lower commanders; and it was by the local successes gained by them that the fate of the battle was decided. The defeat of the Russian extreme left regiment on 26th August, which caused the immediate evacuation of the whole outer position; the destruction of Orlov's brigade on 2nd September, which finally induced Kuropatkin to give up the still undecided struggle—these were the results of the superiority of the Japanese over the Russian soldier, which bore fruit far beyond their intrinsic importance. "Battle," says our F.S.R., "is the decisive act in war," and, again, "An army achieves success only by the combined efforts of its component parts." The component parts of the Japanese army achieved success in battle because the sum of their combined efforts gave them the advantage over their opponents, who, though they entered upon the action with the balance of strategical, numerical, and

physical factors in their favour, were nevertheless out-fought and defeated.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

1. "Japan did well to make peace with Russia when she did, for she had nothing more to hope for by continuing the war."

Discuss this judgment, and show to what main causes the Japanese success up to that point had been due.

2. "The success of an overseas expedition demands as a first postulate that the naval situation is such that the Admiralty can afford reasonable protection to the expedition." (F.S.R. II, 20, 1.)

Discuss the measures taken by the Japanese to comply with this condition in 1904.

3. "In the conduct of war as a whole it is essential to decide upon and clearly to define the object which the use of force is intended to attain. The selection of a correct object demands knowledge and judgment to ensure that the resources which can be made available are sufficient for its attainment." (F.S.R. II, 7, 2.)

Do you consider that the two belligerents in the Russo-Japanese War selected and pursued their respective objects in accordance with this principle?

4. What lessons do you deduce from the experiences of this war as to the conduct of a delaying action?

5. "War is a contest between the will of the opposing commanders." [F.S.R. II (1924), 10, 1.]

Comment on this statement with reference to the Battle of Liao-Yang.

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The Russian failures up to the Battle of Liao-Yang were largely due to their methods of passive defence, using troops piecemeal and allowing themselves to be beaten in detail. They had, moreover, a bad organization and indifferent communications, and troops and officers were fighting in a cause in which they had little interest.

The Japanese, on the other hand, had triumphed by reason of their more thorough and effective organization and preparation for war, more resolute and decisive strategic methods, and the enhanced power of offence and manœuvre conferred on them by their success in securing command of the sea from the first. Most important of all was the fact that Japan's whole independent existence was felt by every officer and man to be at stake; the cause was a truly national one for which no sacrifice was too costly and no exertion too great. Thus it came about that she was able, with her inferior material resources, to overcome and reduce to terms her apparently more formidable enemy.

2. The first step to be taken by Japan as an essential preliminary to an offensive on land against the Russians in Manchuria was obviously to ensure the safety of the transport of her army across the Korean Straits and the Yellow Sea. This could be guaranteed only by the destruction or neutralization of the hostile squadron, and to this end Japan first directed her efforts. Despite the advantages in her favour of surprise, due to her delivering her attack before any declaration of war, and of the dispersion of the enemy forces between three widely separated harbours, she failed to achieve the first and most desirable object, the destruction of the Russian fleet; but she was successful in putting it out of action for the time being, and so rendering the move of the army overseas reasonably secure. But the fact that the Russian Port Arthur fleet still remained in being, and the Vladivostock squadron more or less free of its movements, powerfully influenced the whole of Japan's strategy. She was driven to direct an important portion of her none-too-large force to an attempt to complete the destruction of the fleet by capturing Port Arthur from the land side, and to undue haste and needless sacrifice of life in the attempt to push that attempt to a speedy conclusion. She was induced to retain two divisions at home in wasted idleness, to deal with a possible hostile invasion which never came. The measures taken by the Japanese to ensure the safety of the sea transport and communications of their army in Manchuria were judicious and up to a point successful, in that the army was never seriously endangered on this score; but the incompleteness of her success and the long delay in finally disposing of the menace of the hostile fleet was felt as a serious disadvantage throughout all this first phase of the campaign.

3. Russia must be convicted of having sinned against this principle, in that her armed forces in the Far East proved too weak to achieve the object laid down by her policy, to secure and keep possession of Manchuria and its valuable warm-water ports. When hostilities broke out, her bluff was called; the greater part of the disputed province was speedily wrenched from her, and all her subsequent efforts to regain what had been lost were unavailing. The Russian Government and High Command suffered from overweening contempt for an untried enemy, and an overestimate of their own forces and prestige; the task they had undertaken proved too great for the resources at their disposal, and they paid the penalty of their error in defeat.

Japan, for her part, well aware as she must have been of the overwhelming preponderance of the power of Russia in a straight fight to a finish, yet considered that in a war for a limited object, such as this was to be, the immediate material and moral advantages on her side should suffice to place her in a favourable position, which she should be able subsequently to hold even after the fuller development of the superior measures of her enemy. There is no doubt that

she hoped to gain an early and decisive victory before these resources could be brought to bear at all; but in this she was destined to be disappointed, thanks largely to her decision to pursue at one and the same time the two objectives of Port Arthur and the hostile main army. In assuming that she was strong enough to account for both of these at once, she also fell into the error of underrating difficulties and overestimating the means of overcoming them. But in the main her calculations proved correct; though decisive victory in the field always eluded her, she successfully secured her political object, and the conclusion of peace left the prize of victory in her hands.

4. The following conclusions as to the conduct of a delaying action may be drawn from the experiences of the Russo-Japanese War:

- (a) The commander of a detachment ordered to fight such an action must be given the most careful and precise instructions as to his exact role, the duration of his resistance, and his eventual line of retirement, and must be placed in possession of all information that may assist him in the difficult part he has to play.
- (b) He must be given ample artillery, engineers and mobile troops, to enable him to secure good information as to the hostile movements and to execute an orderly withdrawal when the time comes.
- (c) To allow oneself to become too deeply involved in close combat is to risk the destruction of the detachment and imperil the whole issue of the operations.
- (d) To allow oneself to be frightened into a premature withdrawal is to accomplish but half of one's mission, and may also disastrously influence the course of the campaign.
- (e) Disengagement and retirement, especially under cover of night, can usually be carried out with reasonable safety if adequate arrangements have been made and all preparations completed in advance.
- (f) Special measures must be taken to counteract the unfortunate moral effect on the troops of what may appear to them a needless retreat after their victorious exertions.
- (g) The assuring of timely information and good inter-communication must be among the first cares of a commander entrusted with the conduct of a delaying action, if he is to carry out his task in security and to good effect.

5. A study of the Battle of Liao-Yang, in the pages, for instance, of General Bird's book referred to above, shows that at certain times during the action both Oyama and Kuropatkin were at fault in their estimate of the actual situation and that not all the measures

taken by either of them were appropriate or needful. On the Japanese side, even the move which in the event decided the victory, the turning movement on the north bank of the Taitzo Ho, was based on a misconception of the situation, and might well have had disastrous results. But this seeming error and others of less importance were at least errors on the right side of the balance; they were the expressions of a boldness, a self-confidence, a will to win, which in themselves went far to neutralize their possible ill-effects, and served partly to paralyse the reaction of the enemy. The Russian commander indeed acted throughout as if he were more anxious to avoid a defeat than to gain a victory, and thought more of parry than of riposte. To pass from the defensive to the offensive is the most difficult operation in war, and one of which at the critical moment neither he nor his army proved themselves capable. None the less, at this juncture they had it would seem, every chance in their favour had they in fact been imbued with the will to victory which animated their adversaries, and enabled the latter to win through from so unfavourable a situation. At Liao-Yang, Kuropatkin and his men failed. Oyama and his men triumphed, mainly because the latter would never admit defeat; whereas the former hardly hoped to do more than avoid it, and from being content with such half-success, too easily came to resign themselves to its loss.

THE GREAT WAR, 1914-18

Reference should be made to a General Atlas when studying the Chapter on The Great War, 1914-18

I. THE OPERATIONS

THE Great World War of 1914-18 may be viewed in its broad aspect in the same light as that in which we have viewed the American Civil War—the siege of a fortress, the territories of the Central Powers, by the blockading forces of the Allies; and in studying the events of the campaigns in the various theatres of war this broad viewpoint should always be kept in mind.

The war therefore falls into the following main phases:

- (1) The Investment of the Fortress, August to December, 1914.
- (2) Unsuccessful Assaults, January, 1915, to December, 1916.
- (3) Attempted Sorties, January, 1917, to July, 1918.
- (4) The Fall of the Fortress, July to November, 1918.

1. The Investment of the Fortress, August-December, 1914

The long-anticipated European War, which broke out in August, 1914, was caused largely by the Central Powers' fear of the very diplomatic encirclement by their enemies which the course of hostilities was to translate into a military reality. Germany's first act was to attempt to break this hostile ring by rapidly overwhelming France in the West. Her plan, known as the Schlieffen Plan, involved a swift advance with the bulk of her forces through Belgium and Northern France, with the object of striking into the left and rear of the main French army, held in front by an elastic defence on the Alsace-Lorraine frontier.

The French Plan XVII also envisaged an offensive, eastward and frontal, in Alsace and Lorraine, but fortunately for the Allies neither plan was carried out as arranged.

The position of the small British army on the left of the French line, as laid down for it in pre-war conversations between the Allied staffs, exposed it to the full weight of the German striking wing. In the third week in August, battle was joined all along the frontiers. The French right wing thrust forward into Lorraine and was at once counter-attacked and driven back beyond the frontier; meantime the massive German right and centre overran all Eastern and Central Belgium, drove the Belgian army into Antwerp, and moved on the line of the Meuse and Sambre. Both the strength and the scope of this main hostile offensive had been misconceived by Joffre, the French commander, who now planned an attack aiming

at disrupting the German centre in the Ardennes. A series of encounter battles in this difficult terrain ended in a French defeat all along the line; at the same moment their left, with the B.E.F., was forced back from the Sambre by greatly superior forces, and a general Allied retreat became necessary.

The invaders, following up their success, pressed forward almost unchecked on a wide front into the heart of France. Joffre's new plan, to reinforce his left and renew the offensive from the Amiens area, could not be executed in face of the rapid hostile progress, and the retreat continued beyond the Marne. But here the German advance, weakened by detachments left behind to deal with the hostile fortresses, and by troops sent off prematurely to the Eastern Front, was so exhausted by its own speed of movement and the resulting strain on its rear services that it slowed up to a halt. Moltke, the German chief, now abandoned his design of enveloping the hostile left for a new plan, involving a defensive on that flank, and an attempt to break through the enemy centre and destroy his right wing by a simultaneous attack from the east. This combined attack never materialized; the German centre was held up, their left wing repulsed, and at the same moment Joffre decided on a counter-attack with his own left wing from west and south, to envelop the German right. This attack failed of its full result; but a gap opening in the German right centre, into which the B.E.F. threatened to thrust itself, the invaders were compelled to fall back to avoid disaster, and came to a halt only on the line of the Aisne.

Here they stood fast and beat off the Allied frontal attacks; and from this line each side, in a series of attempts to envelop the other's western flank, prolonged its own front to the north by way of the Somme Valley towards Arras and Lille and the sea. Falkenhayn, who now took over the German High Command, had brought up a new mass in rear of his right, to reduce Antwerp and by an advance along the coast to roll up the Allied line from the north. All efforts to rescue Antwerp proved unavailing, and the forces sent on this mission, and the Belgian army after its evacuation of the fortress, fell back before the new German advance to make touch with the main armies' left, where the B.E.F. was now in line, so as to prolong it by way of Ypres, Dixmude and Nieuport to the sea. Here was fought out a fierce three weeks' battle, in which the Allies, after heavy losses inflicted and suffered, successfully maintained their positions. By mid-November both sides, too exhausted for further effort, sank into trenches, and the era of position warfare, which was to last for three years, had opened on the Western Front.

Elsewhere also the result of the opening operations had been indecisive. On the Eastern Front Russia could offset a disastrous failure against the Germans in East Prussia by a balancing victory over the Austrians in Galicia; but the entry of Turkey into the war on the side of the Central Powers bade fair to increase her

difficulties by completely severing her southern line of communications with her allies. This addition to her enemies also raised problems for England, who not only saw herself faced with a possible serious peril to Egypt and her vital Imperial artery, the Suez Canal, but also felt herself under the necessity of sending a division from India to the head of the Persian Gulf to safeguard her interests there, which included an important oil supply for her Navy, and to counter-balance a somewhat distant and nebulous menace to India. This force accomplished its first limited purpose with complete success, driving the Turks from Basra and the Shatt-el-Arab, and occupying all Lower Mesopotamia as far north as Qurna at the junction of the Tigris and the Euphrates.

The year 1914 thus ended in a general stalemate; each side had successes to show, but neither had achieved anything decisive anywhere. But the failure of the Central Powers to snatch an initial victory was of itself an earnest of the eventual success of the Allies, who now had time to develop and bring to bear their greatly superior belligerent resources.

2. Unsuccessful Assaults, January, 1915-December, 1916

The story of the next two years may be summarized as one of disappointed hopes on both sides. In 1915 Falkenhayn, having failed in his efforts in the West, resorted to a defensive attitude there and turned the bulk of his forces against Russia. Here, despite a series of striking and sweeping victories, he likewise failed to achieve a decisive success; but the Western Allies were no more fortunate in their efforts to take advantage of this diversion of the main hostile strength from their front; for of all their successive attacks none brought more than paltry local gains of ground, and those purchased at disproportionate cost.

The first British efforts in the spring of 1915 at Neuve Chapelle, Aubers and Festubert proved no more successful than those of the French in Champagne and Artois in achieving any noteworthy result; indeed, the Germans in this period registered the only important gain of ground at Ypres, where, thanks to their surprise use of gas, the Allied line was forced back some distance and was in considerable peril of breaking altogether. Despite these discouraging experiences, the British in the autumn were induced by the ever-sanguine Joffre to venture upon yet another offensive at Loos, designed as a diversion to a French attempt at a large-scale breakthrough in Champagne. Both enterprises were failures, and costly ones; and by the end of the year the line of battle in the West still ran practically as at its beginning, while the Russian military power had been seriously and, as it turned out, mortally injured, and even the accession to the common cause of a new ally, Italy, had not materially influenced the military situation.

In the Eastern theatres, too, such few successes as had attended

the Allied armies were of limited scope and were more than counter-balanced by a long list of defeats and failures. New campaigns had been undertaken in Gallipoli and Macedonia, while the operations in Egypt and Mesopotamia had assumed a wider scope. Of these new Allied enterprises the most promising and least successful was the expedition to Gallipoli. Inspired by the desire to aid Russia by restoring her severed communications with the outside world, and cutting off Turkey from her allies, the scheme was first prematurely revealed by ill-timed naval action undertaken without due preparation and with inadequate forces, so that the landing force could do no more than gain a precarious footing on the Peninsula. Its further efforts to widen its tenure were a series of costly failures; the reinforcements necessary for any real success were denied it for five months, and then the opportunity offered by a new surprise landing successfully accomplished was lost by bad luck and bad leadership. A stalemate similar to that in the West now ensued, while the decision whether to get on or to get out was debated at home; at the last possible moment the verdict fell for evacuation, a perilous and delicate task which in the last days of 1915 was successfully accomplished without the loss of a man.

Shortly before the final abandonment of Gallipoli, the Central Powers had added one more to the list of Allied failures in this unhappy year by enlisting Bulgaria on their side and overrunning all Serbia. This induced the dispatch of a new Allied force to Macedonia, where it was unable till the very end of the war to do more than hold its ground about Salonica. As against this, England could set only the repulse of a small Turkish attack on the Suez Canal in February, which still left the enemy hovering in close proximity to it.

In Mesopotamia also the year which had opened brilliantly closed as unhappily as elsewhere. After the repulse of a Turkish counter-attack on Basra, the British commander had been led first to extend his area of occupation up the Euphrates to Nasiriyeh and up the Tigris to Amara and Kut, and then to undertake an advance on Baghdad, for which his available resources were quite inadequate. The force thus sent forward was defeated at Ctesiphon and compelled to seek refuge in Kut, where at the end of the year it was invested without any prospect of immediate relief.

The year 1916 on the Western Front was marked by two great offensives, one by either side. In February the Germans, with the object of wearing down the French by attrition and of forestalling the great Allied attack which they expected later in the year, attacked at Verdun. Ground was gained though at a high cost, and both these main purposes of the operation were to a considerable extent served; but the Allied offensive, though weakened from its original scale, commenced in July on the Somme, and made slow but steady headway till the coming of winter enforced its cessation.

Here also the material gains were out of proportion to the casualties; but the Germans, who suffered almost as heavily, could afford their losses less than the Allies. The introduction by the latter of a new offensive weapon, the tank, was for the moment important more by its promise than by its actual performance. The Hindenburg and Ludendorff combination had now replaced Falkenhayn at the head of the German Army.

In their own theatres the Italians and Russians had put forward great efforts with little material profit to show for them; and while the stalemate in Macedonia continued, a new ally, Roumania, who had come in in the autumn, was swiftly defeated and her country overrun. On the Egyptian front, however, a new Turkish attempt against the Suez Canal was repulsed at Romani; they were then slowly forced back to the Palestine frontier, and by the end of the year Egyptian territory was clear of the enemy, and preparations for the invasion of Palestine were well in hand. In Mesopotamia, on the other hand, 1916 had seen the culmination of the disaster foreshadowed at the end of the previous year; a series of ill-managed attempts to raise the siege of Kut failed one after the other, and in April the garrison of 9,000 men was forced to lay down its arms. The residue of the British force had been so weakened that for the rest of the year it could do no more than push forward its preparations for renewed active operations in 1917.

3. Attempted Sorties, January, 1917-July, 1918

In March, 1917, the eastern wall of the investing ring round the Central Powers suddenly collapsed; a revolution broke out in Russia, which almost at once drove her out of the war, and by the autumn had thrown her into chaos and laid her territory and resources open to enemy possession. A disaster of little less magnitude a few weeks later menaced France, where the fatal failure of a much-trumpeted offensive on the Chemin des Dames caused a widespread mutiny; the worst consequences were averted, but for six months her Army was rendered unfit for any active operations. The brunt of the fighting in the West thus fell to the lot of the B.E.F., then fortunately at its maximum strength; it had already co-operated with the luckless French offensive by an attack at Arras, and now, after a brilliant local operation at Messines, it threw all its forces into an attempt to loosen the enemy grip on the Belgian coast-line by a powerful offensive north-eastward from Ypres. Bad weather, unsuitable ground and the German system of elastic defence foredoomed this operation to painfully slow progress at maximum cost in casualties and exhaustion; winter came with the line advanced no farther than the Passchendaele crest, and the German hold on the coast still unshaken. This toilsome and murderous conflict, and the necessity of sending troops to Italy after her defeat at Caporetto, forbade any advantage being taken of a brilliant

little victory at Cambrai in November, when tanks, used for the first time in masses and under suitable conditions, proved themselves the offensive weapon *par excellence* of modern war. Meanwhile the collapse of Russia had freed numbers of German troops for the West, and, though the mighty potential forces of the United States had come in on the Allied side as a make-weight, few of her troops could be available in the critical period in that theatre which was to be foreseen for the spring of 1918.

In November, 1917, as we have seen, the Italians suffered a serious defeat which thrust their line well back into the plains and all but disintegrated their armies, while in Macedonia the *status quo* continued. In the Near Eastern theatres only were the Allies able to show any useful results for their vast efforts. In Palestine the summer found them held up before the defences of Gaza, which defied two successive attacks, but with the autumn a new commander, Allenby, with new resources, found a way round by Beersheba, rolled up the Turkish front from east and south, and, pressing on northwards in the hills to outflank their successive lines of defence in the coastal plain, forced them out of Jerusalem before the year's end. In Mesopotamia an equally brilliant campaign had also placed the British in possession of the capital of the country; Maude, assuming the offensive towards Kut, and constantly thrusting out by his left till he could cross the Tigris beyond the Turkish flank and come in on their rear, defeated them so decisively as to render it impossible for them to maintain themselves in Baghdad, which fell into his hands in March. Before the end of the year the British had pushed up the Tigris to Tekrit and stood within striking distance of the last Turkish defences at Mosul.

Meanwhile, in the West the final German offensive was in active preparation, to break on the British lines at and to the north of their junction with the French. It was delivered in March, 1918, and sweeping and almost decisive success was at once achieved; in a few days the Allies lost all their gains of the previous two years, and were forced back to within a few miles of Amiens. They could not, however, be driven apart or disintegrated; Ludendorff decided to switch his forces over to new attacks, first northward to the Lys Valley and then southward to that of the Aisne. In both these sections he gained considerable ground and inflicted and suffered heavy losses, but failed to rupture the Allied line or establish a decisive advantage. The Allies, forced by the logic of circumstances to unify the command in the West under Foch, and with every week bringing them in fresh American troops to make good their losses, which the Germans on their side were in no position to do, were now growing in strength in proportion to their enemies, whose failure to enforce a decision in the few fleeting weeks of their numerical superiority rendered their ultimate defeat certain.

4. The Fall of the Fortress, July–November, 1918

Five brief months now brought final victory to the Allies in the West. The last desperate German offensive on the Marne was converted from a repulse into a defeat by a well-managed counter-stroke, and on 8th August a massed tank attack in front of Amiens met with such sudden and complete success as to cause Ludendorff to lose his last hope of victory. Foch followed up this blow with a rain of others, directed now at one point, now at another, with all the Allied armies chiming in in turn; the Germans, never heavily defeated or shattered, were beaten back from one line of defence to the next, demoralization and disintegration growing ever wider as they went, until, when the last of their rearguards stood on the northern frontier of France, they asked for and accepted the Allies' terms of surrender.

This collapse had been brought about largely by causes other than their obvious failure in the West—privation, discomfort and disorder at home, the disastrous news from Macedonia, where the sudden and inexplicable collapse of Bulgaria had opened all the rear of the Central Powers to attack, and the complete defeat of the Austrian Army in Italy. All these factors in combination had broken the will of the German people, and caused them to rise against their Government and accept peace on any conditions rather than endure the hopeless misery and losses of continued war.

In the Near East the two British campaigns against Turkey had also been brought to a decisive conclusion. In Palestine Allenby carried out a brilliant operation in which he drove a gap through the Turkish front, passed his cavalry through into their rear, and effected a disorganization and destruction so complete as to wipe out the whole of the hostile forces opposed to him at one blow. The end of hostilities with Turkey saw all Palestine and Syria as far as Aleppo in British hands. In Mesopotamia, too, the enemy forces had ceased to exist, having been swiftly rounded up and forced to lay down their arms, leaving the British in undisputed possession of the whole country from the Persian Gulf to Mosul. Thus the Allies' four years' siege of the Central Powers' fortress terminated, after many vicissitudes, in the complete collapse of all its defences and its unconditional surrender.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

There are in existence two excellent short histories—the one by Sir George Aston in the Home University Library, and the other by Douglas Jerrold in Benn's sixpenny series. The former is the soberer and fuller; the latter the more readable and brilliant. For fuller detail of each campaign the Official Histories are of course the main source; but the student will probably find it preferable and more profitable to rely on less lengthy works, such

as Wavell's *Palestine Campaign* and Evans's *Brief History of the Mesopotamian Campaign*. The best of the one-volume general histories are Liddell Hart's *The Real War* and Winston Churchill's *The World Crisis*—both the more suggestive and valuable for the critical and unorthodox spirit that animates their pages.

III. SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. One point which will at once strike any student of the Great War is the difference between the anticipations of pre-war military circles as to its nature and duration, and the actual course of events as they occurred. The prevalent belief was that a great European War must, for financial and economic reasons alone, be short, sharp and decisive; that victory and defeat would depend on and be registered in the results of the earliest engagements; and that, as only the offensive could ensure success, it was wise policy to attack as soon as possible, and in as great force as possible. All these notions were directly falsified by the event. The conflict became an affair, not of weeks, but of years; the decision, so far from being achieved in the first battles, came about in the main from causes other than military; and from the first day of the war to the last the defence, where it enjoyed anything like numerical and material equality with the attack, was completely dominant. War was shown once again to be pre-eminently the domain of the unexpected; and the recollection of so great a host of earnest and far-sighted prophets prophesying falsely may serve as a wholesome corrective to our common tendency to dogmatize and lay down the law as to the probable course of any future war.

2. The most striking of the military phenomena was undoubtedly as we have said, the predominance of the defence over the attack. So pronounced was this that it could not be countered even by greatly superior numbers, which in pre-war days would have been regarded as synonymous with superiority of force; more attackers simply meant more targets and more casualties. Material means in great potency had to be called in to restore the lost momentum to the attack; and these were at length found in a combination of massed artillery, floods of gas, hundreds of tanks, and a wealth of other resources. All this was needed on the Western Front, to expel the Germans from the broad belt of French and Belgian territory, which, thanks to surprise, their own rapidity of movement, and the errors of their enemies, they had seized as a stake at the very commencement of the war, and for the recovery of which they exacted so fearful a price. The same phenomenon, in a less pronounced form, manifested itself on every other front; everywhere the defence was on top and only a manifest and manifold superiority of military means at the disposal of the assailant could reverse the position. Since only the offensive can bring about a military decision, the war on all fronts tended to draw itself out

interminably and indecisively; the beaten side was worn rather than struck down; results were disproportionate to efforts and sacrifice; and victory cost the victors far more and profited them but little more than the vanquished.

3. British war policy in the Great War differed strikingly from that followed by her in previous conflicts on a similar scale in the past. Its main object was to place and maintain in the West a force comparable in size and nature to the Continental armies besides and against which it was fighting; in other words, to take part in the war as a first-class military power and in the principal theatre of hostilities. Never before in our history had we attempted, much less achieved, such a feat. Our policy was no doubt motivated by the imminent peril menacing our shores, our fleet, and our commerce, should the Germans come into possession of the French and Belgian coast line—a peril intensified by the development of long-range artillery and submarines; and also by the exigencies of our alliance with France and our treaty obligations to Belgium, both of which could most easily and obviously be satisfied by direct military action in the main theatre. Once committed to this, as for all practical purposes we were by the pre-war agreement between the General Staffs concerned, and by the dispatch of our Expeditionary Force in accordance with its terms, we could only with extreme difficulty have transferred our main effort elsewhere, even could this have been done without risk of a decisive Allied defeat in the West—such as in fact was barely averted in the spring of 1918. It was, rightly or wrongly, the definite view of our Allies throughout that a British Army in as great strength as possible on the Western Front was essential if defeat there was to be averted, much more so if victory was to be achieved; and there was never any doubt in the mind of the British High Command that this was the correct view; that the West was the main, the decisive, theatre and the rest merely secondary to it; and that in this theatre the maximum possible force must be concentrated to achieve a victory, which, if once achieved there, would automatically decide the issue in the subsidiary theatres also.

4. For a certain school of critics who made their voices heard not only during but also after the war, this was a policy false to the historic role of British arms in the past, and ill-suited to the needs of the situation as it then existed. To their minds the British Army should again have been utilized as a projectile to be fired by the British Fleet and should have endeavoured once more to exploit the advantages of mobility and surprise conferred by sea power. As against this it may be argued that rail power and the central position of our adversaries so far modified the situation as to make sea power no longer a speedier means of transport than any available on land; so that wherever we had planned to set foot on shore, the enemy could have been there before us, in greater force. A landing in the

face of opposition has now become one of the most difficult operations of war; and suitable objectives for such action on our part were so few and obvious as to make it unlikely that we should be able to surprise them undefended. In a word, to the contention that our true strategy would have been to find a way round, it is replied that there was no way round, or, if there was, it was not in fact the shortest way home.

5. If this be admitted, or if we take the situation as it actually developed, in accordance with our accepted war policy, we find the Western Allies committed to a duel with Germany in France and Belgium—a duel fought out with the utmost fierceness and tenacity, and ended in favour of the Allies rather by non-military causes than by any decision in the field. It is the accepted view of this duel, sanctified by no less an authority than Lord Haig in his despatches, that the contest in the West was in essence a long-drawn-out four years' battle, the year 1914 being devoted to the preliminary engagement, 1915 to 1917 to the wearing down of the enemy and the exhaustion of his resources, and 1918 to the decisive attack which brought victory. It can only be remarked in commenting on this view that no such conception of the contest was in the mind either of our own or any Allied commander at the time; for them every attack from 1914 onwards was to bring about a decision by a break-through and the speedy defeat of the enemy; hope sprang eternal in their breasts, only to be deceived. For, in fact, no military decision in this, the main theatre of the Allies, was ever achieved. It took four years merely to deprive Germany of the gains she had made in the first four weeks of the campaign; the main reasons for her surrender were political and social rather than military, and in so far as they were military it was not so much that Germany had been defeated as that she could no longer hope for victory.

6. Even if it be true that Germany herself stood invulnerable to any blow we could have struck at her by means of sea power—and it must be remembered that a combined operation against Schleswig Holstein and a landing on the Belgian coast in rear of her battle line in Flanders were both at one period contemplated and planned—her allies, and particularly Turkey, were in this respect less fortunately placed. As against Turkey, a landing in the Gulf of Alexandretta had much to be said for it, and was frequently mooted; but it was never put to the proof of trial, largely by reason of the extra strain it would have placed on our naval and shipping resources. It could hardly have proved less fruitful in results or more costly in men and ships and supplies than the "internment camp" at Salonica, which we entered upon and maintained for purely political reasons and in subservience to the wishes of our Allies. The Gallipoli expedition, an even more promising enterprise, was ruined less by its own inherent impossibility—everything we have learnt since the war goes to prove the insight and vision of its

authors and to show how near we came to complete and important success in the Peninsula—than by faults in execution, from which no human enterprise can expect to be free, but which in this case sprang primarily from the fact that we had embarked on two major campaigns with resources inadequate even for one. We might conceivably have made a great success of Gallipoli had we definitely and resolutely decided to make our main effort there, and to abandon the attempt to drive the Germans from France, a task which we realize now, and our High Command in France realized then, was in 1915 not possible of achievement. French military opinion, however, was at the time confident of success in this task, and for reasons no doubt of the highest political weight, the British Government overrode its own High Command and fell in with its Ally's views. Thereby we condemned the Gallipoli expedition to failure, and lost the most favourable opportunity the four years' war offered of exploiting advantages conferred on us by sea power for decisive military ends.

7. Gallipoli, the blow at the heart of Turkey, having miscarried, we proceeded to strike at her extremities, and the two campaigns in Palestine and Mesopotamia ensued. The offensive operations in the former theatre had at least this justification—that they were the logical continuation of the defensive campaign on the Suez Canal, laid upon us of necessity from the first, in order to preserve that vital artery of communication from a disastrous interruption. The best way of utilizing the troops necessarily employed on that task—many of whom were in any case unsuited for use in the West—was to assume the offensive, so as to ensure that they retained as large a hostile force as possible in their front. The campaign ended, as we know, in a brilliant and complete victory, the story of which we could ill have spared from the annals of war. It must be observed, however, that it took 450,000 men to gain this victory over 100,000 Turks, and that it was the culmination of four years of great effort and expenditure, which seem hardly proportionate to the results achieved.

8. For the campaign in Mesopotamia even less justification can be offered. This, too, ended in the complete victory of British arms and the annihilation of the forces opposed to them; but the cost of this result, achieved only after a series of vicissitudes, some episodes of which reflected but little credit on our reputation in arms, was even more out of proportion to its intrinsic importance, and to its influence on the main issue of the war. Every essential British interest in Mesopotamia was secured in the first six months of the war when the head of the Persian Gulf and the oilfields were safely in our hands; all the rest was an unnecessary and unjustified subsidiary effort. Even the primary object and result of this and the Palestine campaign—the elimination of Turkey—could probably have been secured more speedily and at less cost had we adopted

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a defensive attitude with the minimum of force on the Suez Canal and around Basra, and landed a force at Alexandretta for an offensive campaign in Asia Minor, the true heart of Turkey.

9. The chief lesson of the Great War is only a confirmation of one we have already had occasion to deduce from the story of the American Civil War. A war between nations, proud, independent, warlike, fighting for what seems to them a just cause, or for their very existence—such a war is not to be decided by military means alone. Every sort of pressure—moral, diplomatic, economic and even social—must be brought to bear to break so stern and sturdy a resistance. Such pressure takes long to exert its full forces—victory and defeat come as a result of attrition rather than of brilliant and decisive battle. It called for the power of all the manifold forms of Allied superiority, exercised unremittingly and unrelentingly over a period of years, to break down the heroic will and high national pride of the German peoples—and to them, even more than to the victors in this greatest of all wars, history will probably decree its laurels.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE WAR

1. "He that commands the sea is at great liberty and may take as much and as little of the war as he will." (Bacon.)

How far is the above statement, which was written 300 years ago, still true today?

2. A high military authority spoke some time back of the "lost art of generalship." Do you consider that the Great War can be taken as proof of this verdict? And what were the causes of any decline of generalship evident therein?

3. Illustrate from the campaign in Mesopotamia the relationship between policy and strategy.

4. "The general proposes, the administrator disposes." Give examples from British campaigns in the Great War of the dependence of strategy and tactics on administration.

5. Do you consider that the belligerents in this war made the fullest and best use of the valuable new weapons placed in their hands by the progress of science and invention?

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. Bacon's aphorism hardly retains its full former force under modern conditions. We now have an overseas Empire with maritime communications and these islands are no longer self-supporting; therefore it is necessary for us to maintain these communications and our overseas trade intact at all costs; yet the submarine and aircraft have enabled attacks to be directed against them far more deadly and difficult to combat than in the past. It is of even more importance for us now than in Napoleon's time to ensure that no hostile power established itself on the Channel coast; for an

enemy so placed would not only be able to jeopardize the territory of these islands, but would be well placed to attack the overseas traffic on which the existence of nation and Empire depends. We were thus bound to play an active military part in Europe. In addition, our Imperial maritime routes and commercial stations abroad had to be safeguarded, often against attack by land, and had therefore to be defended by military means, thus increasing our commitments and the demands on our land forces. We no longer find it possible to adopt the policy of "splendid isolation" from Continental entanglements and military effort which had sufficed us in the past—and that principally because we are now no longer an island kingdom, but a great and far-flung maritime Empire.

2. It is true that what was formerly recognized as the art of generalship was not conspicuous on the Western Front. The idea of manœuvre was absent from most attacks; surprise was too seldom sought for; the main idea of the basis of every offensive operation was to accumulate material means and numbers superior to those of the enemy, and drive a way into or through his positions by sheer force. On the other hand, the operations on the Eastern Front and in our Near Eastern campaigns furnish some admirable examples of the art of generalship, such as Tannenberg and Lodz the final battle in Palestine, and the operations in Mesopotamia in 1917 and 1918. It would seem that for the exercise of the art of generalship at its best, two conditions are required. Armies must not be too large to be easily moved and handled, otherwise their powers of manœuvre are hampered by the resultant excessive demand on the administrative machine, without which no army of today can fight or live; and the high standard of training necessary for efficiency in open warfare can with difficulty be attained in the case of million-strong armies. Secondly, the theatre of operations must be wide enough to allow free space for such manœuvres; where battlefronts are so wide as to occupy the whole theatre from end to end and rest their flanks on impassable obstacles, nothing but frontal attacks are possible; and frontal attacks are the negation of generalship. Open spaces, intervals, gaps and flanks must exist or be manufactured if generalship is to have a chance of free play. Where these existed, and armies were small and handy enough to take advantage of them, generalship of a high standard showed itself, even in the Great War. Where these conditions were absent, the general inevitably degenerated into a military artisan and generalship became for the time being a lost art.

3. The first object of our Mesopotamian operations was no more than to uphold our established political position at the head of the Persian Gulf, and to protect the oilfields there; this object it was well within our power to achieve, as the event showed. But thenceforward our ambitious or timid policy mistakenly forced on us a faulty strategy; exaggerated fears for the security of India urged

on our commander in Mesopotamia an advance to Baghdad, for which he had at the time no adequate means, and thereby led to a series of defeats, which had the fancied peril really existed, must have led straight to the disaster we hoped to avert. We thus found ourselves launched on an enterprise which had utterly miscarried, and which it was incumbent on us to retrieve, though no sufficient military end was to be served by victory, and even a barren victory could be ensured only at disproportionate cost, and at the expense of more vital issues elsewhere. In the event, complete success was in fact gained, but it was of purely local importance, and in no way affected the issue of the war as a whole. The danger we feared, if it had ever really existed, could have been averted far more easily and effectively at far less cost, and the Turkish force destroyed was but an unimportant fraction of the whole. Policy thus first led strategy to disaster, then forced it to make too high a payment for too trifling a gain—and this was because it overstepped its function and allowed its visions to outrun realities.

4. Such examples of the interdependence of strategy and tactics on administration might include the following:

- (a) The unfortunate delay in carrying out the landing at Gallipoli, due to the fact that in the embarkation of troops and stores no consideration had been given to disembarkation requirements at the other end.
- (b) The part played in the fiasco at Suvla by insufficient administrative provision, especially for water supply, and for the evacuation of casualties.
- (c) The general failure of administration throughout the whole course of the Gallipoli campaign, which crippled our chances of success from the first.
- (d) The slow rate of progress imposed on our advance across the Sinai Desert by the impossibility of running too far ahead of the railway, road, and pipe line, without which our army could not be maintained.
- (e) The frequent pauses necessary in the autumn, 1917, offensive in Palestine owing to the difficulty of water supply for the large mounted forces engaged.
- (f) The disastrous results of the early Mesopotamian operations, due to the complete breakdown of the administrative machinery at the base and on the lines of communication.
- (g) The enhanced power of movement and manœuvre bestowed on General Maude's army as soon as adequate measures had been taken to supply all his administrative needs.

5. The two new inventions which proved of the utmost value for war purposes were, of course, gas and the tank. In each case

the device, after being manufactured and issued in the utmost secrecy, was used in the field only on a small scale. Thus the valuable factor of surprise was lost, no decisive effect was achieved, and sufficient warning was given to the enemy to enable him to take timely counter-measures. It has been affirmed that this was a serious error; if a large-scale use of these devices by surprise had been made, they would have been of far greater value at the time, and important, even decisive, results might have been attained before the enemy could have countered them. It seems that there was little belief in the mind of the German and British High Commands in the efficiency attributed to these devices by their sponsors, and therefore their first employment was regarded as an experimental one only. These first experiences certainly taught valuable lessons, which enabled the devices themselves and their methods of use to be subsequently improved; but it may fairly be said that insufficient weight was given in either case to the importance of surprise, and that the great results that might have accrued from catching the enemy unprepared were underrated.

THE CAMPAIGN IN EAST PRUSSIA, 1914

I. THE OPERATIONS

THE three phases of the East Prussian campaign of 1914 were as follows:

- (1) The Russian Offensive, 1st to 22nd August.
- (2) The German Counterstroke against Samsonov, 23rd to 30th August.
- (3) The German Counterstroke against Rennenkampf, 31st August to 17th September.

1. The Russian Offensive, 1st-22nd August

On 1st August, 1914, Germany declared war against Russia after a period of strained relations, during which both belligerents had taken initial steps to mobilize their armies. Within a week from this date Germany was also at war with France, Belgium, and Great Britain on her western frontier; and Russia with Austria-Hungary, who had herself also been at war with Serbia for some days.

Russia and France, being allies, had some years previously come to a military agreement as to the joint action to be taken in the event of war with the Central Powers. On the supposition that Germany would first direct her main attack in the West against France, it had been agreed that Russia on her side should make her main effort against Austria, and assume a subsidiary offensive only against Germany about the fifteenth day of mobilization. The Russian concentration was being carried out on this basis; but the French pressed for a stronger offensive against Germany at as early a date as possible; and the Russian High Command therefore decided to extemporize an attack against East Prussia, which, from its position, projecting out as a salient into Russian territory, offered from the strategic point of view a favourable objective for attack, though the terrain itself afforded tactical difficulties to such an operation. This offensive was timed by the Russian High Command to commence, if possible, on 13th August, the fourteenth day of mobilization.

The conduct of the operation was entrusted to the First Army (Rennenkampf) (six and a half infantry and five and a half cavalry divisions) which was assembling on the eastern frontier of East Prussia in the area Shavli-Poneviej-Olita-Kovno, and the Second Army (Samsonov) (twelve and a half infantry and three cavalry

divisions) assembling on the southern frontier in the area Augustovo-Grodno-Bialystock-Warsaw-Lomja. Both armies were under the general control of Jilinsky, commanding the north-west front. The First Army was to advance north of the Masurian Lakes, the great impassable obstacle occupying the whole of the south-east angle of the invaded province, so as to pin down the main bulk of the German forces and turn their left, while the Second Army advanced south of the lakes to turn the German right and cut off their retreat to the Vistula. The general direction of advance was for the First Army from the line Wierzbolowo-Suwalki to the line Insterburg-Angerburg, for the Second Army from the line Myszeniec-Chorzele by Rudczanny-Passenheim to Rastenburg-Seeburg.

Opposed to these strong Russian forces was Von Prittwitz's Eighth German Army (eleven infantry divisions and one cavalry division), which was disposed in two groups one in the southern sector with forward detachments on the line Ortelsburg-Soldau-Strasburg, the other in the eastern sector with forward detachments on the line from Tilsit along the frontier to Goldap; weaker forces between these groups held the gaps between the lakes.

To compensate for their two-to-one numerical inferiority, the Germans could count on the superior quality of their troops, leadership and equipment, on their excellent communications, and on the suitability of the terrain for defence.

Although the Russian administrative arrangements were still incomplete, and their various corps, particularly in the Second Army, had to make long and continuous marches over bad roads to reach their assembly areas up to time, the advance in both sectors took place more or less as ordered, the First Army crossing the frontier on the 17th, the Second Army on the 18th. Rennenkampf's command, despite two local set-backs on the 17th and 19th in engagements with the German advanced detachments, had by the evening of the latter day reached the line from west of Pilkallen and Stalluponen to Goldap, and here, on the 20th, it was attacked by the main body of Prittwitz's army. The latter had left his XX Corps and some second-line troops in the south to observe Samsonov, and concentrated seven infantry divisions and one cavalry division to deal with Rennenkampf, who was taken quite unawares by this move. However, though the Russian right was driven back some distance with heavy loss, their centre and left held their ground against disjointed German efforts, which were repulsed in some disorder. Both commanders decided that the battle was lost; but as the German retirement took place first, Gumbinnen could be reasonably claimed by the Russians as a victory, of which, however, they completely failed to take advantage.

The orders issued by Prittwitz for retirement had, in fact, been largely caused by the news from the south, where Samsonov had begun his advance on the 18th, and by the evening of the 20th stood

on or just south of the frontier from Dombrowy by Chorzele to Mława. It was the report from the German XX Corps of this menace to his left and rear that caused Prittwitz to lose his nerve and decide to fall back at once behind the line of the Vistula. While he was telephoning this decision to the German Supreme Command at Coblenz his staff were preparing orders for quite another scheme—a concentration of forces in the south for an attack on Samsonov, and to this Prittwitz later agreed. He omitted, however, to inform his superiors of this change of plan, and on the 22nd, as the German corps in the north, safely disengaged from before Rennenkampf's inactive front, were moving west and south-west by rail and road to come to the aid of the XX Corps, news came in from Coblenz that Prittwitz and his chief of staff were to be replaced by Hindenburg and Ludendorff.

2. The German Counter-offensive against Samsonov, 23rd-30th August

When the two new chiefs arrived on the scene, they found the orders already issued for a southward concentration entirely suitable to the situation, menacing as this appeared at the moment to be; by the 25th the slowness of the Russian advance in the north had emboldened them to leave nothing but cavalry in that area and concentrate every division on the decisive battlefield. The I Corps sent round by rail, had already come into line on the right of the XX, and the XVII and I Reserve Corps were now ordered to march down on either side of the Insterburg-Allenstein railway to come in on the left, the whole then to carry out a concentric attack against the Russian Second Army.

That army, driven forward at full speed over bad roads, ill-fed, ill-equipped, and very weary, stood on the evening of the 25th on the general line Kurken-Usdau, with a corps detached as flank guard away to the right at Bischofsburg. Samsonov, against the will of his superior, Jilinsky, had directed his line of march far to the west of the objective originally allotted to him, with the idea of getting well round into the rear of an enemy he supposed to be in full retreat for the Vistula; this delusion had also led him to disperse his forces to a degree highly dangerous in face of the impending attack.

On the 26th the battle opened all along the line, both sides being on the offensive. The Russian left was checked at Usdau, but their centre made progress as far as the line Allenstein-Hohenstein-Muhlen. On their right at Bischofsburg, however, a serious disaster befell their VI Corps, which, expecting to be attacked, if at all, from the east, was surprised by the two German corps coming in from the north and thrown back in complete rout to Ortelsburg, thus leaving the flank and rear of the main army entirely exposed. The victors, however, directed their blow not into Samsonov's rear, but against

the flank of his advancing centre at Allenstein; and the fatal stroke, which proved of annihilating effect, was left to be dealt next day, and on the other flank, by Francois' I Corps.

On the 27th this corps successfully stormed the position held by the Russian left at Usdau and, disregarding an order from the Army Command to turn north against the left flank of the hostile centre, thrust north-eastward to Neidenburg and across the southern exits of the Grunfliess forest to Willenburg, right athwart the Russian line of retreat. Samsonov's two centre corps were thus caught in a trap from which few succeeded in making their escape; practically the whole force, exhausted, starving, without leaders, and in complete confusion, was killed or captured, despite an effort by the Russian left corps to rescue them by a gallant counter-attack against Neidenburg from the south, which the Germans only beat off with difficulty.

By the 30th only the debris of Samsonov's army had made its way across the frontier, leaving behind its commander and thousands of dead, over 120,000 prisoners, and 500 guns. The battle of Tannenberg, the greatest single victory of the Great War, had thus rid all the south of East Prussia of the invaders, and left the German Eighth Army, soon to be reinforced by two corps sent over from the Western front, free to deal with Rennenkampf in the north.

3. The German Counter-offensive against Rennenkampf, 31st August-17th September

The Russian First Army, after its fortunate success at Gumbinnen, had halted on the field for three days, and had then moved slowly westward astride the Königsberg railway as far as the line of the Deime, before which it arrived on the 27th. Its left wing, pursuant to new orders to Rennenkampf from Jilinsky to pursue the enemy, supposed to be in retreat to the Vistula, was pushed out south-westwards, and by the 29th reached the line Pr. Eylau-Bischofstein, of course without seeing anything of the Germans, who were far off in the south culling the final fruits of Tannenberg. In these positions the First Army stood when the news of Samsonov's disaster reached it; a few days later it began to feel hostile pressure on its left front and drew back to a position partly prepared for defence behind the line of the rivers Deime, Alle and Ohmet, with its left wing extending the front as far as Lake Mauer at Angerburg, and flanking detachments south-east of the Lakes.

Rennenkampf was correct in his belief that he was about to be attacked in force. Leaving a detachment to observe the southern frontier for any possible peril from the remnants of Samsonov's army and its reinforcements, Hindenburg was moving fourteen infantry and two cavalry divisions to deal with the Russian First Army. His plan was to send Francois with three divisions round the south end of the Lakes, and Mackensen with two more by the Lotzen gap to

come in on the hostile flank, while nine divisions, delivered the frontal attack. On 7th September Francois' turning column was in touch with the enemy at Bialla; by the evening of the 9th he had driven in all the Russian flanking detachments as far north as the line Lyck-Soltmahnen, had opened the way through the Lotzen gap for Mackensen, and stood on the flank and almost in rear of the main Russian position north-west of the Lakes.

The frontal attacks on this position had also opened on this same day, 9th September, but nowhere was any real progress made, and it was solely the menace to his left that caused Rennenkampf to issue orders that night for a general retirement, to be covered by a heavy counter-attack from the line Angerburg-Nordenburg. This counter-attack was completely successful in its main purpose; the Russians broke off the action, got a start of twenty miles in the first twenty-four hours, and so imposed on the German High Command as to cause it considerably to slow up the speed of the frontal pursuit, and to draw in Francois towards Darkehmen. This move sacrificed any remaining chance of enveloping the Russian left; but the condition of Rennenkampf's troops, after their severe fighting and rapid retreat, was so deplorable as to render any prolonged stand out of the question. They recrossed the frontier in considerable disorder on 12th and 13th September and eventually found refuge behind the line of the Niemen between Kovno and Merez. The Germans followed no farther than the line Suwalki-Mariampol-Pilwizski. The Russian First Army, which had lost 125,000 men and 150 guns, was thus for the time being entirely out of action; and after exactly a month of active fighting East Prussia was completely freed from the invader.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER READING

Two good brief accounts of these operations are to be found in Liddell Hart's *The Real War*, and in Mr. Winston Churchill's volume on the Eastern Front. The best available narrative, however, is that of General Ironside, whose *Tannenberg* is a brilliant piece of history and criticism, full of interest and packed with useful ideas and lessons for the student.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. The East Prussian operations on the Russian side show very clearly the difficulty and danger of changing a matured and prepared plan of campaign for another one improvised in its place. The necessary alterations in train times, movements of units, and the various complicated administrative measures on which the success of every such plan depends, cannot be hurried through at short notice without grave danger that some of them, and those not always the least important, may be forgotten or inaccurately

worked out, as was the case here. The imagined necessity for a rapid offensive, for which nothing had been foreseen, led to it being undertaken prematurely, and this in turn to an excessive strain on the physical powers of the troops, an almost complete breakdown in the supply services, and a consequent shortage of food, particularly in the Second Army. As General Ironside comments, "Improvisation in modern war is becoming more and more difficult owing to the administrative difficulties involved. Such improvisations are better left unattempted if there is any doubt about the soundness of the administration." In Russia's case there could be little doubt that her administrative resources were inadequate to bear the great strain imposed on them by this last-moment change in her plan of operations in the north-west theatre.

2. The plan for the offensive campaign in East Prussia, quite apart from the administrative difficulties involved, was an ambitious one not likely to be too easy of execution, even as a strategic operation pure and simple. It was in effect an offensive on exterior lines by two armies operating from separate bases, with an impassable obstacle preventing them from affording each other anything but indirect support in the earlier stages of the operation. The secret of success was careful timing, so as to minimize the risk of any hostile stroke against one or other of the separated armies before the other could make its presence felt. The role of the First Army being to hold fast the Germans in the north, it had to move off first, but the Second Army had to deliver the decisive blow, and it was on its movements that the whole scheme hinged. As it happened, the timing went astray from the first. *Rennenkampf* set off too early and failed to hold the enemy in his front long enough to allow *Samsonov* to come in on their line of retreat. The latter's start was unduly delayed, so that he had to drive his troops too hard from the first. Even then he came into action too late, just when the enemy had completed their break-away from before *Rennenkampf* and were massing to strike him. His peril was increased by his own unwisdom in diverging from the original direction laid down for him and heading away too far to the west, thus depriving himself of any hope of direct support from his colleague, widening the hostile zone of manoeuvre, and taking a risk which would have been justified only if his erroneous assumption, that he had to deal merely with a beaten and retreating enemy, had been correct.

3. Even so, the Russians' numerical superiority might have availed, at any rate to save them from so disastrous a defeat as *Tannenberg*, had their commanders taken steps to keep themselves in close touch with the actual situation. But this they failed to do, and so had to work in the dark throughout. Their failure to make use of their overwhelmingly superior cavalry to maintain a close watch on the enemy and get early news of his move and intentions seems inexcusable. It is true that, to judge from the elementary

orders that were often given it, the Russian cavalry was in no very high condition of efficiency, and it even failed on several occasions to guarantee its own forces from disastrous surprise. But it is impossible to believe that it could not have been made better use of; and we should not then have seen the spectacle of one army halted inactive and self-satisfied at one end of the theatre while its sister army was being annihilated at the other; or of the commander of the latter force making all his plans to cut off the retreat and complete the destruction of an enemy who had never been really beaten and was about to involve him in one of the greatest military disasters of history.

4. The fate of Von Prittwitz, unfortunate as it was, cannot be said to have been unmerited. Up to a point his conduct of the campaign had been excellent. His initial disposition of his forces and his arrangements for guarding the frontier were entirely suitable to the situation. His decision to assume the offensive against *Rennenkampf*, while the latter was still out of reach of any support from his colleague, was commendable and wise; and even though the execution of the attack at Gumbinnen left something to be desired, it served to bring to a halt the progress of the Russian First Army. But at the first menace to his rear, Von Prittwitz showed weakness, gave up the whole game, and prepared tamely to accept defeat and the failure of his mission. It was true that the situation was threatening; but that it was by no means irretrievable the course of subsequent events was to prove; and indeed Von Prittwitz himself, after he had recovered from his first alarm, recognized that all was by no means yet lost. Unfortunately for him, but fortunately for his army and for Germany, he had been unwise enough to display to his superiors the weakness of character which, rather than lack of ability or knowledge, had led him astray; and he thereupon gave place to two men of quite another stamp, who were to do Germany very different service. Von Prittwitz's downfall may be taken to prove the truth of the old dictum in our F.S.R., "For a successful commander the first and most essential attribute is character"—"the ballast," as Napoleon put it, "without which the ship will capsize."

5. From the moment of Von Prittwitz's removal from the scene the German operations were resumed on the sound classical lines of the manœuvre from a central position, as first devised by Napoleon, and this time without faltering or loss of precious time. For this manœuvre the Germans had from now on everything in their favour—the higher tactical value of their troops, artillery superiority, high potential mobility (thanks to their admirable system of railways and roads), better information, and a thoroughly efficient staff and command—this last the only thing which hitherto they had lacked. These advantages enabled them now to nullify the only disadvantage under which they stood *vis-à-vis* the Russians,

and even to obtain superiority of numbers at the decisive point. It is possible to find minor faults in the conduct of the Battles of Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes; it is also possible to dispute at length on the exact share of credit for these two victories to be apportioned between Eighth Army H.Q. and their chief subordinates; but it is more profitable to note the incalculable superiority of the German army over the Russian as a fighting machine, and the way in which that superiority was turned to good account in the two great battles which decided the fate of East Prussia and were to forecast the whole course of the war on the Eastern front.

6. That immeasurably greater results were attained at Tannenberg against Samsonov than a few days later against Rennenkampf in the battle of the Lakes may be attributed in part to the inferior physical and moral conditions of Samsonov's army, as against that of Rennenkampf's command, which had at least a half victory at Gumbinnen to its credit, and had suffered less from the disastrous effects of the administrative breakdown. The chief reason, however, was that Tannenberg was an encounter battle, a battle of manoeuvre, in which the German army had every chance of exploiting its superiority as a fighting machine; while at the Lakes the Russian First Army stood to receive attack in a strong defensive position, where it was able to display all its good qualities, and could find some make-weight to those of its enemy. The war of trenches was already coming to appear as the stand-by of the weaker and less well trained side; and so it will be in any future war, unless from the first operations can be kept fluid and open, and the more mobile and higher trained belligerent can gain and retain the initiative, and never allow his clumsier adversary to go to ground. Quite apart from the fact that position warfare marks the lowest point of the military art, it tends inevitably to degenerate into a war of attrition, at the termination of which there are no victors and all alike are sufferers and vanquished—an experience the repetition of which a sadly disillusioned and impoverished world will hardly be able again to endure and still survive.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

1. "The ease and rapidity with which the strategical concentration can be completed may exercise a great influence on the course of the campaign." (F.S.R. II, 18.) Trace this influence on the Russian operations in East Prussia in 1914.

2. "Surprise is the most effective and powerful weapon in war." [F.S.R. II, 8 (iii).] How do you account for the fact that in this campaign this weapon remained almost throughout in the hands of the Germans?

3. Do you consider that Von Francois' departure from orders

at the Battles of Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes were in accordance with the principles laid down for such action in F.S.R. II, 129 (6)?

4. To what extent do the events and result of this campaign bear out the dictum that effective administration is the primary condition of success in war?

5. Do you consider the study of this campaign to be of special value for British officers, and if so, why?

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The original Russian plan of campaign, which dated from 1910, certainly envisaged operations against East Prussia, but only as subsidiary to the main movement against Austria, and even so they were not to take place immediately after the completion of mobilization. All the arrangements for mobilization and concentration were made on this basis; but in the first days of August, 1914, a complete change of plan was ordered; and in accordance with subsequent conversations with and in response to the urgent request of her ally, France, Russia decided to improvise a rapid offensive into East Prussia with the two armies of her right wing. This decision not only dislocated to some extent the original scheme of concentration, but entailed the dispatch of the two armies concerned on their mission while they were still short of many of the essential services on which they depended for food and ammunition. In addition, the detrainment of the Second Army being several marches distant from the frontier, long and sustained marches were necessary—and these at the opening of the campaign, when the troops were still new and soft—if the accurate timing on the keeping of which the whole success of the operation turned was not to be lost. The difficulties and delays occasioned by the last-minute alteration of the original Russian plans of concentration were an important factor in the ensuing disasters.

2. It was no doubt comparatively easy for the Germans, who were operating in their own territory, to conceal their own movements and get early news of those of the enemy; but as against this the Russians possessed an overwhelmingly superior force of cavalry, and the German air resources were too slight really to compensate for this. Surprise springs first and foremost from lack of information on the side that suffers it, and under all heads one would have expected that this powerful weapon would have been in Russia's hands. But she threw it away, firstly, because she failed to make effective use of her numerous mounted troops, who were given unsuitable tasks or no definite task at all, were so ill-trained and ill-led that they had to be instructed by superior authority in their most elementary duties, and often showed discreditable lack of enterprise and fighting spirit. Secondly, the Russian troops and

subordinate leaders were frequently guilty of culpable carelessness about security measures, and allowed themselves to be taken unawares and at a disadvantage, both at the halt and on the move. Thirdly, the Russian staffs and signal services played into German hands by sending important messages and orders by wireless and uncoded, thus making the enemy a present of vital news as to their position and intentions. Under these circumstances it was only to be expected that they should time and again suffer for these errors, and pay the penalty for their neglect to observe the principle of security.

3. The rules governing a subordinate's decision as to whether to abide by or depart from any superior orders which he considers it impossible or unwise to obey, are that, if possible, he must first refer to the issuer, otherwise, he may, and indeed must, depart from his orders if he is satisfied that his superior, were reference to him possible, would authorize such departure.

Judging by these principles, we must conclude that on none of the three occasions in question was Francois justified in amending the orders he had received from Eighth Army H.Q. to suit his own views of what the situation required. He was, it is to be supposed, in touch with that H.Q. and could have asked its leave and obtained it very quickly, had he been able to convince it that his proposed actions were the more appropriate to the position. But it is probable that it was just because he was not at all certain of being able so to convince his chiefs that he took the bit between his teeth and rode off in his own chosen direction, in defiance of his orders. The historical facts that he was more right in his views and actions than they, and that but for his disobedience victory must have been less decisive, and its fruits much smaller, should not blind us to the fact that in acting as he did he transgressed the sound doctrine laid down in our regulations, or to the grave peril of such transgression to the discipline and co-operation so vital to success in modern war.

4. It has already been seen how the hurried alteration of the Russian plan of campaign in the opening days sent both their armies, and the Second in particular, into East Prussia with the administrative services in rear of them incomplete, and also imposed on them unexpected marching exertions, for which the men were not as yet fit. One result of this was that after Gumbinnen the First Army was hardly in a condition to undertake a vigorous pursuit, and was only too glad of the chance to halt and rest, and make good its deficiencies. An even more serious result was that by the time the Second Army came into contact with the enemy at Tannenberg its troops were worn out by long and toilsome marches over bad roads and country, and had been for days so ill-fed that they were in a state of semi-starvation. Troops in such a condition were in no way fitted to put up a stiff fight; and the history of the battle, so far from showing the Russian soldier at his stubborn and resolute best, is full of withdrawals and panics, which can be accounted for

only by the bad physical state to which Samsonov's army had been reduced by weariness and starvation. There are instances in this campaign of administrative failures on the German side also, which, both at Gumbinnen and the Masurian Lakes, went far to upset their plans. All these examples show how swiftly and surely the neglect of administrative considerations in war revenges itself on the parties guilty of it.

THE PALESTINE CAMPAIGN 1914-1918

I. THE OPERATIONS

IN this campaign there follow five distinct phases:

- (1) The Turkish Offensive against Egypt, November, 1914–August, 1915.
- (2) The Abortive British Offensives, December, 1916–May, 1917.
- (3) The Invasion of Palestine and the Capture of Jerusalem, 31st October–31st December, 1917.
- (4) The Operations in the Jordan Valley, 1st January–18th September, 1918.
- (5) The Final Victory, 19th September–31st October, 1918.

I. The Turkish Offensive against Egypt, November, 1914–August, 1915

In November the European war, then in its fourth month, was extended to the Middle East by the accession of Turkey to the side of the Central Powers. This at once opened up two new theatres of operations in Iraq and Palestine, to which there was shortly to be added a third on the Gallipoli peninsula. The hostility of Turkey threatened in two places Britain's line of sea communications to her Eastern Empire, at the Suez Canal and in the Persian Gulf, and also severed Russia from direct communication with her Western allies.

Britain prepared to meet the threat to the Suez Canal by concentrating five divisions in Egypt, of which two, the 10th and 11th Indian, in all 30,000 men, were dispersed along the 100-mile length of the Canal. In mid-January, 1915, they were attacked by a force of two Turkish Corps, the VI and VIII, only some 20,000 strong, which had, contrary to all expectations, succeeded in crossing the waterless Sinai desert to appear opposite Ismailia. Their attempts to force a crossing were easily repelled, but they were allowed to withdraw unmolested. This, apart from a few spasmodic raids on the Canal and a campaign in the western desert of Egypt against the Senussi Arabs, which began in November, 1915, and went on until the rebellion was finally quelled in February, 1917, were the only noteworthy incidents in this theatre of war during 1915 and the first half of 1916. In the summer of 1916 the Turks renewed in greater force their offensive against Egypt, the threat of which, ever present in the minds of the British Government,

had led to the concentration of twelve divisions in Egypt and the erection of elaborate defences blocking the eastern routes of approach to the Suez Canal. By June, 1916, this force, however, had been reduced to seven divisions, when, after a series of bold and successful raids on our forward posts, a Turkish force of 16,000 men advanced to Romani, north-east of Kantara, and attacked the British defences there. Its attempt to envelop the right flank of our much stronger force was repulsed; but the opportunity to launch a decisive counter-attack was lost, and the enemy successfully extricated his defeated troops, half of whom had, however, become casualties.

A few weeks earlier Turkish difficulties in this theatre had been much increased by the outbreak of an armed revolt, fostered by British emissaries and gold, among the Arab population of the Hejaz, on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, which during the whole remainder of the war necessitated the use of a considerable force of Turkish troops to contain it, and was to make in due course an important contribution to our final victory.

2. The Abortive British Offensives, December, 1916–May, 1917

In December, 1916, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, now under General Sir A. Murray, assumed the offensive in the Sinai desert with two infantry divisions and a mounted division. It began with the occupation of El Arish, Magdaba, and Rafa, after which it was suspended until March, 1917. There were available for its renewal four infantry and two mounted divisions, with which Murray launched an attack on the strongly fortified Turkish positions covering Gaza. The cavalry cut the retreat of the enemy garrison and the infantry pressed it so hard that its surrender had already been decided on when, owing to a misunderstanding of the position and a report of the approach of enemy reinforcements, victory was allowed to slip from our hands, and the attack, all but successful, was called off as a failure. In mid-April the offensive against Gaza was renewed, but the Turkish front was now powerfully fortified and the result was a costly repulse. Some weeks later General Murray was replaced in command of the E.E.F. by General Allenby, with the mission of pushing the offensive in Palestine with all available means. Three more infantry divisions, making a total of seven in all, and a third mounted division were placed at his disposal for this purpose, and all these were available for the start of the offensive, when as the Turks had only some 50,000 men, our total of 75,000 men gave us a supremacy of some 50 per cent.

3. The Invasion of Palestine and the Capture of Jerusalem 31st October–31st December, 1917

General Allenby's plan was first to capture Beersheba, the pivot of the Turkish left wing, with the three infantry and two cavalry

divisions of the XX Corps and Desert Mounted Corps, then roll up the hostile centre about Sheria, and finally cut off the retreat of the enemy's right wing from Gaza. Success depended on secrecy and surprise, which were secured by an elaborate series of deceptions tending to make the Turkish believe that our actual objective was again Gaza. Beersheba duly fell to a dashing cavalry attack, and the storming of the defences at Sheria followed, despite a strong enemy counterstroke at our right flank guard north of Beersheba, which was only repelled with difficulty. The garrison of Gaza, seeing itself attacked in front by the two divisions of the XXI Corps and its line of retreat threatened by the advance of the XX Corps from the east, made its escape before it could be cut off. The whole Turkish Army had thus been defeated with heavy loss, and forced to abandon its prepared defences of the Palestine frontier and fall back to the north, under heavy pressure from the British cavalry following in pursuit.

By 9th November our XXI Corps on the left having reached the line of the Wadi Hesi, and on the right the XX Corps and the Desert Mounted Corps had attained the Huj area. General Allenby now ordered the mounted troops to secure the Et Tine-Beit Duras area, so as to turn the Nahr Sukereir, the next Turkish line of defence to the north; but exhaustion and shortage of water and supplies prevented their arrival in front of this line in force till the 11th, and the Turks gained time to occupy and entrench a position farther back on the Nahr Rubin and Wadi Surar, where some 20,000 men stood to cover the junction of the main Damascus-Beersheba railway and the road to Jerusalem. Only our cavalry and XXI Corps were available for this operation, which was forestalled by a vigorous Turkish counter-attack on 12th November. This was repulsed, and after some hard fighting and a brilliant mounted charge at El Mughar, our attack was successfully carried through on the 13th. The Turks fell back, uncovering the junction, and sought refuge behind the line of the Auja, leaving Jaffa, Ramleh, and Ludd in our hands, and opening the road via Latron to Jerusalem.

The Holy City was Allenby's next objective; and leaving the defeated Turkish Eighth Army behind the Auja to be observed by the XXI Corps, he directed his right wing, the XX Corps and the Desert Mounted Corps, to assume the offensive eastwards against the Turkish Seventh Army in the hills. The difficulties of supply, climate and terrain were great, and in the event proved too formidable to be overcome without more prolonged preparation than was possible, if the exploitation of our recent successes was to be immediate. Two infantry and two cavalry divisions were pushed up the Latron road, with orders to swing off from Enab on Birch, pivoting on their right, and throw their left across the Nablus Road, so as to cut off the Holy City from the north. After hard fighting in the hills,

the British right reached Enab on the 20th; but the left was held up in front of Bireh, and the right, coming up to its aid, could get no farther than Nebi Samwil. At this stage a halt was called in the operations, to enable the offensive to be resumed later with fresh troops and resources.

A fortnight passed in effecting a relief of the XX by the XXI Corps in the hills and in preparing for a second attempt on Jerusalem. During this period Falkenhayn, now in chief command of the Turkish forces, organized a series of gallant counter-attacks, which, however, failed to effect their object and involved heavy losses; and by 8th December we were ready for a new advance. This time the plan was for the XX Corps to pivot on its left at Nebi Samwil and swing its right north-east past Jerusalem to the Nablus road. Despite bad ground and weather, the operation met with complete success; the Turks, fighting less stoutly than usual, were driven from most of their entrenched positions in the first twenty-four hours of the attack, and by the morning of the 9th had abandoned the remainder and streamed off northwards, leaving us to occupy Jerusalem at our leisure. A series of local operations only were necessary to make our positions secure. On the night of 20th-21st December the XXI Corps on the Auja surprised the passage of that river and drove the Turks back to Arsuf; in the hills north of Jerusalem a final Turkish counter-attack had to be beaten off before the XX Corps could press forward to the line Beitin-Nalin, where at the end of the year it halted, consolidated, and settled down for the remainder of the winter. All energies were now devoted to pushing forward and improving the rearward communications, and to putting in hand the manifold necessary preparations for further advance on the return of favourable campaigning weather.

4. The Operations in the Jordan Valley, 1st January-18th September, 1918

Early in the spring of 1918 it had been decided by the British Government that the offensive in Palestine should be resumed that year with the object of knocking Turkey out of the war; and Allenby, secure in the promise of three Indian divisions as reinforcements, planned, after securing his right flank by occupying the Jordan Valley, to resume his northward advance between that river and the coast towards Damascus. In February the first step was accomplished by the capture of Jericho and the enemy positions in the Judean Hills immediately north and north-west of it. A month later there took place the first of the raids directed to the destruction of the Hedjaz railway about Amman and to the subsidiary purpose of affording aid to the revolted Arab tribes operating in that area. The raid was not successful in its primary purpose, only a temporary break being effected in the line; and, while it was yet in progress, the sudden crisis resulting from the German

success in France forced the British Government to order a defensive attitude in Palestine and the early dispatch of the equivalent of one cavalry and three infantry divisions (all British) to the Western theatre. Indian units came to replace them, but the necessary reorganization of course took some time; none the less, in May the Amman raid was repeated, with no better success than before; indeed the raiders were all but caught and hemmed in against the swollen Jordan on their return journey, and left some guns behind them. The rest of the summer passed in virtual inactivity; but the two Amman raids, and Allenby's retention of two cavalry divisions in the Jordan Valley, confirmed the Turks in the erroneous belief that this area was destined to be his next scene of operations.

5. The Final Victory, 19th September–31st October, 1918

Meanwhile, preparations had been going forward for a British offensive on the opposite flank, which was destined, thanks to the manifold and careful measures taken to mystify and mislead the Turks, to come as a complete surprise to them. Liman von Sanders, the new Turkish C.-in-C., had at his disposal a force of some 35,000 fighting men and 400 guns, organized in three armies, the Eighth and Seventh from right to left west of the Jordan, the Fourth east of it; but he had against him 70,000 men and 550 guns and an even greater superiority of equipment and *morale*. Allenby, confident of his victory, planned to make it an annihilating one by concentrating two-thirds of his force against the enemy Eighth Army—a four-to-one superiority—to break a gap in its front, and pass through his cavalry to establish themselves on the Turkish lines of communication and retreat in the area Afule–Beisan, thus completing the destruction of the whole enemy force west of the Jordan. Meanwhile the remainder of his force to the east of the Jordan, together with Feisal's Arabs, was to engage the hostile attention in its front, and seize its chance to exploit the victory on the other side of that river.

The battle was fought and won exactly according to plan. On 19th September, while the XX Corps in the Judean Hills pushed a converging attack upon Nablus, the XXI Corps in the coastal plain effected a break-through on its whole front from Rafat to the sea, and, swinging up its left north-eastwards to Tul Keram, opened the way for the three divisions of the Desert Mounted Corps to push through for the hostile communications. The cavalry met with little resistance in their northward ride; by dawn on the 20th they had threaded the passes through the Mount Carmel range into the Plain of Esdraelon, and during the day they surprised and broke up Liman von Sander's headquarters at Nazareth, occupied Afule and Beisan, and blocked the mouth of the Dothan Pass at Jenin, the main line of retreat of the beaten Turks. By the evening of the 21st the infantry, pressing forward from the south, had herded the

remnants of both Turkish armies into the arms of the cavalry, and no organized hostile force was left in existence west of the Jordan.

Upon this, leaving his left wing to occupy Acre and Haifa and prepare for a further advance on Damascus, Allenby turned his attention to the one remaining Turkish army, the Fourth, east of the Jordan. This had delayed too long in beginning its retreat, and, leaving behind one corps to be cut off and forced to lay down its arms at Ziza, the bulk of it gradually melted away under the pressure of the pursuing British and Arabs before it could reach Damascus. The British cavalry, moving in two converging columns from south and south-west, arrived before that city on 30th September, and there broke up the last organized enemy resistance of the campaign in the course of taking possession of it.

The remainder of the advance was a processional march, carried out mainly by a single cavalry division and a few armoured cars with some Arab auxiliaries, from Rayak via Homs to Aleppo, which was reached and occupied, together with the important Muslimic junction on the Baghdad railway, on 26th October. Five days later Turkey sued for and was granted an armistice. Her forces, both in Palestine and in Mesopotamia, had been completely destroyed in one of the most brilliant and successful operations of all time.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER READING

The main authority for this campaign is, of course, the second volume of our Official History, while for a critical narrative we are fortunate to have a model specimen of its kind in Brigadier Wavell's *Palestine Campaign*, farther than which the student need not go either for facts or for comments.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. It is now clear that the defence of Egypt in the first period of the war was over-insured, and that the large forces concentrated there could have played a more useful role than that of mere passive defence imposed on them by British higher strategy. The danger of attack was overestimated, for it was not possible for the Turks, without extensive and prolonged preparations which they could not have kept concealed, to launch a serious offensive in force across the Sinai desert. The Suez Canal line and the defences erected on the approaches to it were formidable obstacles which could not be rushed but must have been attacked methodically and could be forced, if at all, only by the slow process of successive assaults. All this was far beyond the power of the military and material resources of the Turks to accomplish without powerful help from the Germans, which was never forthcoming. Thus some 30,000 Turks in Palestine successfully neutralized for more than eighteen critical months a British force which at the maximum

reached a strength of some 250,000 men and even in the summer of 1916 still stood at 154,000. Had she done nothing else during the war than pin down and paralyse these greatly superior hostile numbers, Turkey would have deserved well of her allies.

2. The failure of the 1917 British offensive in Palestine must be put down primarily to the lack of effective and vigorous leadership at Gaza, which gave up the battle when victory was in fact in its hands, and only resolution was required to grasp it. Twice before, at the actions of Magdhaba and Rafa, the command had shown a similar inability to grasp the true situation and an undue readiness to relinquish a victory already won. At the first Battle of Gaza the fruits of what the troops had so gallantly gained at considerable cost were thus gratuitously thrown away, while the second battle was undertaken without any reasonable prospect of success in face of the strong Turkish defences and the lack of adequate superiority of numbers and resources. In fact, General Murray was not a fortunate leader in the field, nor was his method of command from a distance calculated to increase our chances of success. His good service was in administrative measures for the advance across the Sinai desert and the offensive against Palestine, without which Allenby's great victories could not have been won. In a theatre such as Palestine thorough and far-sighted administration forms the ground work of success in battle and victory in a campaign. Murray did this indispensable work and Allenby reaped its fruits.

3. The failure of the British to exploit as fully as was hoped their successes at Gaza and Beersheba early in November, 1917, was caused by no lack of energy or boldness in commanders or troops, but largely by causes beyond their control. Chief among these was the skilful rearguard fighting of the Turks, and their timely counter-stroke in the hills north of Beersheba, which halted our right wing long enough to allow their centre and left to get clear, absorbed the energies of a considerable portion of our mounted forces just at the time when every horse and man was required for exploitation of our success to the west, and forbade us the swiftest and most profitable form of pursuit—an outflanking movement in force directed so as to come in on the rear of the beaten enemy and block his line of retreat. Minor contributory causes were the delay in organizing the water supply at Beersheba, which caused our cavalry horses to be exhausted at the moment when they were required to put forward their best efforts; and the failure of one division to make use of the gap already opened for it at Sheria, and the loss of time and men suffered by it in its attempt to break its way through by a frontal attack. Thus it came about that the Turks were able to effect their retreat in comparative safety and make another stand on the Nahr Rubin-Wadi Surar line, which we had again to fight hard to wrest from them. Our victory at Gaza-Beersheba had been real and important, but the Turkish

army was too formidable a fighting force to permit us to make that victory a crushing one.

4. Falkenhayn's handling of his inferior force in the autumn of 1917 was capable and resolute, and goes to enhance his already great reputation as a soldier. At the time of the Battle of Gaza-Beersheba he had hardly assumed effective control, and then entered upon an inheritance of defeat and enforced retirement difficult to retrieve. Yet he was able to get his army back intact and to concentrate sufficient forces for timely counterstrokes, which at least had the effect of slowing up our advance, and giving him time to take up new defensive positions at leisure. That these counterblows achieved little in the way of more positive result was due to the fact that they had perforce to be delivered by troops whose energies had been sapped by previous exertions and long approach marches. This same cause lay at the root of the failure of his last and greatest effort—the attempt to recapture Jerusalem at the end of 1917. In truth the error of Falkenhayn, as of almost every other German general called on to handle forces of nationality other than his own, was to ask too much of his men, to demand from them what German troops, well trained, well led and with their morale high, might have accomplished but was beyond the power of the inferior Turkish military machine. His conception and orders were admirable, but they failed in fact to stem the tide of defeat flowing against him from the first day of his assumption of effective command.

5. Lord Allenby at the end of November, 1917, had to make that most difficult of all decisions for a commander on the offensive, who, after a first success, finds himself faced with a new and onerous task. Should he undertake it forthwith, relying on the *élan* and heightened morale of his troops flushed with their recent victory, and on the disorder and demoralization bound to be more or less present in the ranks of his enemy, to enable him to take his next obstacle at a rush? Or should he pause to refresh and regroup and push up his forces and their rearward services, to supply all their deficiencies, and to make at leisure all the manifold preparations for a new and distinct attack, hoping that the necessary interval of time for all this can be put to more profit by himself than by the enemy? Whichever be his choice, he will lay himself open to the *ex post facto* critic, who will declare that the alternative decision would have brought him greater or less costly results. In the case in question, Lord Allenby elected for the first of these courses; and, though complete and immediate success was denied him, the event may be said to have justified his decision. He was enabled to secure rapidly, and at a cost considerably less than would have been the case had he delayed his first attempt on Jerusalem, ground of great importance for the prosecution of the subsequent effort, which a fortnight later was to put him in possession of the Holy City.

6. The importance of the capture of Jerusalem lay less in its

strategical or tactical value than in its moral effect on public opinion in all the belligerent countries, and throughout the whole of the East. The Holy City—holy to men of no less than three religions—was a gauge of success or failure far more appreciable by the popular mind than the most vital strategic point or the most formidable tactical position; it was a true instinct which made Mr. Lloyd George ask it of Lord Allenby as a Christmas present for the British people, at a time when war prospects were at their darkest, and which made the British C.-in-C. select it as his first objective. A war of nations is, as we have more than once insisted in these pages, not an affair of military action alone, but a conflict of minds and spirits, where moral forces have even more than their normal weight, and where to seem victorious is little less important than being so in reality. It was because the possession of Jerusalem was a criterion of universal appeal that the city became the stake of conflict all through 1917. No Turk would have surrendered it of his own free will, any more than a Frenchman would leave Paris to an invader until driven to do so; and no more important proof or fruit of our victory at the end of that year could have been offered to the weary and disillusioned, though still resolute, Allied peoples.

7. The sweeping and far-reaching conception which lay at the base of Lord Allenby's plan for his final battle aimed not merely at the defeat but the utter destruction of his enemies. He designed at one and the same time to cut their lines of communication and so dislocate their physical organization; to sever their lines of retreat and so destroy their morale; and last, but not least important, to destroy their line of intercommunication and so paralyse the brain of their army at the critical moment. In all these interdependent aims he entirely succeeded. It so happened that the lines of communication and lines of retreat of the two Western Turkish armies lay within reach of a far-flung cavalry stroke in the area El Afule-Beisan; and to secure possession of these would enable him to fulfil simultaneously the first two of the above aims. The third he achieved partly by means of the co-operation of the Arabs, who were induced to distract at the critical moment the attention of the Turkish High Command, already anxious and expectant of a blow east of Jordan, and cut off the flow of supplies to the front by a raid on the important nodal point of Deraa. In conjunction with this, he delivered a series of intensive air attacks against the main hostile telephone and telegraph exchange at El Afule, and von Sanders's Army headquarters at Nablus and Tul Keram, thus severing all the Turkish arteries of inter-communication, and leaving their army rudderless and undirected at the mercy of their assailants. These measures, combined with the multifarious and ingenious devices for deception and concealment practised by Allenby in the period just prior to the great battle,

rendered an overwhelming success a matter of virtual certainty before the first shot had been fired.

8. The greatest lesson of the whole campaign is, of course, the value of mobility and its concomitant surprise, which added so immensely to the moral force of the assailants that little application of physical force was necessary for the final victory. But mobility is not to be attained merely by the possession of a mobile force; that force must be used judiciously, not wasted by premature use in unfavourable circumstances, nor kept closely in hand for a chance of using it which may never come unless deliberately planned for and manufactured. When it has been decided to use such a force the utmost care is necessary, and was always displayed by Lord Allenby, to ensure its supply and maintenance, without which much of its mobility will quickly be lost. To ensure that, when every other circumstance is favourable, the utmost value is garnered from that most formidable but fragile of weapons, a mobile force, there is still needed the energy, insight, resolution and swift decision of the leader, without which, as Napoleon said, "men are nothing," and the highest possible standard of training among the subordinate officers and the rank and file, who will have to execute his designs—designs which perforce he may be able to impart to them in outline only, and which may have to be speedily and effectively adapted to rapidly changing circumstances.

9. In both these last respects, too, the Palestine Campaign has its lessons for us. In the concluding pages of the Official History the student will find a sketch of Lord Allenby as a commander which is well worth his closest attention. We are told how he restored the lost personal touch between leader and troops; and so taught them one and all to trust and rely on him; how he made his presence felt at every point of the front, even in the midst of battle, and never lost a chance to impress on his subordinate commanders his own energy and will. "The influence of the Commander-in-Chief in the moral sphere," it is stated, "can never be too much emphasized in considering this campaign."

As regards the troops the nature of the operations allowed full opportunity for the progressive training which was impossible in other theatres, and their standard in this respect was always a high one. How well this served them in action only the full story of the operations can show. Infantry attacks afforded scope for manœuvre, for local initiative, for the exercise of tactical skill, and for use of ground only to be found in a war of movement; and such opportunities were utilized to the full. Cavalry charges with the sword were not here, as in the West, a thing of the past, and when combined, as they usually were, with supporting and covering fire, proved on more than one historic occasion of decisive effect. These examples of what trained and well-led troops can achieve under

favourable conditions may well serve as encouragement for the future as well as models for our emulation.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

1. "An energetic pursuit is the only means by which the full fruits of victory can be gathered." (Cav. Training, II, 7.)

How do you account for the difference in results achieved by the pursuit after Gaza and that after Megiddo?

2. "Always mystify, mislead and surprise the enemy if possible." (Stonewall Jackson.)

Outline the methods employed by General Allenby in September, 1918, to give effect to this maxim.

3. Do you consider that the two Amman raids in the spring of 1918 were justifiable and worth while?

4. What were the reasons which, in September, 1918, led Allenby to attack the westernmost Turkish army? What can we learn from his action?

5. Do you consider our cavalry pursuit after Megiddo could equally well and with equally far-reaching results have been achieved by a mechanized force?

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The results of the Battles of Gaza-Beersheba, great and important as they were, did not amount to a decisive defeat of the Turks, who still maintained their morale and cohesion, and were able to effect an orderly retreat under cover of rearguards, which fought well and stubbornly to gain time for the main body to get away. Their counterstroke north of Beersheba prevented our cavalry from attempting any wide out-flanking movement on that side to cut in on their rear and intercept their withdrawal—always the most effective form of pursuit; our horsemen were compelled to attempt penetration through the gap to the west of that town, along a route where the absence of water forced them to go slow; they were tired by hard marching and fighting in the few previous days and were weakened by necessary detachments for protective work. Under these conditions, it was not possible for us to press the Turks vigorously enough to convert their retreat into a rout.

In September, 1918, the circumstances were far more favourable to us. The Turks were much inferior in numbers, ill-equipped, and war-weary; our carefully staged attack resulted in a speedy success and enabled us swiftly to pass a fresh and strong force of cavalry right round their flank and into their rear, so as to block all their avenues of retreat within a few hours of the frontal victory. The defeated Turkish forces thus found themselves cut off, surrounded, and doomed to annihilation.

2. The measures taken by Lord Allenby to mystify, mislead and surprise the Turks in September, 1918, were remarkably well thought out and complete. It was of the first importance to conceal from them the preliminary transfer of the bulk of his forces (one infantry and two cavalry divisions) from the Jordan Valley and the Judean Hills to the coast. This was effected by making all the principal movements secretly by night; by making use of all available cover in the new concentration area to hide the assembly of the troops; and by accommodating the fresh arrivals in camps already pitched and widely spread, so as to be able to contain large additional numbers without visible increases of size. Much of this was possible only by reason of the fact that our Air Force had by this time ensured to us complete supremacy in the air.

Meanwhile, in order to foster and maintain in the enemy's mind the belief that we intended to continue our spring operations with our eastern wing in the Jordan Valley, the cavalry camps there were left standing and reinforced by new ones; the horse lines were filled with dummies stuffed with straw, which from the air were indistinguishable from real horses; dust-clouds were raised by sleighs; units were marched down into the valley by day and sent back by lorry at night; additional bridges over the river were thrown; wireless traffic was maintained and even intensified; preparations were openly made for the transfer of G.H.Q. to Jerusalem, and agents were sent to Amman to buy forage. All these various measures contributed in no small degree to the success of the offensive, by completely deceiving the Turks as to its real direction and purpose.

3. The main object of our raids on Amman was twofold—to get into touch with and aid the Arab forces operating in that area, and to induce the Turks to move and retain their reserves in that direction, thereby facilitating the main offensive which, as early as February, 1918, Allenby had, as we know from his discussions with the Home Government, planned to deliver on the opposite wing at the earliest opportunity. Both these objects were fully achieved, though, thanks partly to bad weather and unfavourable ground and partly to ill-fortune, the operations themselves were tactically unsuccessful. The Turks withdrew part of the force engaged in checking the enterprises of Feisal's and Lawrence's Arabs in the south and brought them north to reinforce their garrisons in the Amman area. Further troops were sent across the Jordan from the west and retained there all through the spring and summer, thus permanently weakening their centre and right, and facilitating our task in the great autumn offensive which was to decide the issue of the campaign. From the strategical point of view, therefore, the raids were fully justified, and brought results which more than compensated for their immediate failure as tactical enterprises.

4. The reasons given by Lord Allenby himself for his choice of objective in September, 1918, were as follows:

His operations in March and May had shown him that, though it was important for him to gain touch with the Arab forces east of the Dead Sea, it was perilous to do so as long as the communications of any force operating east of the Jordan were liable to attack by troops transferred thither from the west bank. So long as the Turks controlled the crossing of Jisr ed Damie they were always in a position to effect this transfer; and only the defeat of the Seventh and Eighth Turkish Armies west of the river could deprive them of this possibility. Moreover, such a defeat would isolate the Fourth Army east of the Jordan if it continued to hold on to the area west and south of Amman. Lord Allenby determined, therefore, to strike his blow on the area west of the Jordan.

We may learn from this decision the importance of selecting, if the chances of tactical success are equal, that area for attack which promises the best strategical results from success; the particular advantage which should accrue from such choice to a commander having a great superiority in mobile troops and the necessity for selecting the plan promising to afford the best opportunities for their use; and the far-reaching effects of the concentration of superior force at a well-chosen decisive point.

5. Great as were the achievements of the cavalry in enforcing the surrender or bringing about the destruction of the whole Turkish army in the pursuit after Megiddo, it may well be maintained that as much, if not more, could have been accomplished by a mechanized force. Armoured protection and great fire-power might well have enabled it to overcome more swiftly and effectively any resistance encountered; it would not have been hampered by considerations of water supply or forage or by the exhaustion of men and horses. Much of the ground was entirely favourable to its operations; and indeed the armoured cars and light-car patrols, which in actual fact worked with the cavalry, found their activities in no way hampered by the terrain, and did most useful work. Special measures would have been necessary to enable the force to clear the passes of the Carmel Range into the Esdraelon Plain, but this task could have been carried out by infantry in lorries or by cavalry co-operating with the force. Problems of petrol supply and repair would certainly have needed careful organization, if the mechanized units were not to be seriously depleted by breakdowns or brought to a stand for want of fuel; but there is no reason to doubt that these could, given sufficient time and transport, have been satisfactorily solved. As cavalry has been the mobile arm of the past, so will mechanized forces form that of the future; and the outstanding lesson of the Palestine Campaign, the inestimable value of mobility however achieved, is as applicable to and as valuable for the one as for the other.

THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN FRANCE AND BELGIUM, 1914

I. THE OPERATIONS

THE British operations in the West in the first seven weeks of the war comprised:

- (1) The Entry into France, 4th-22nd August.
- (2) The Great Retreat, 23rd August-5th September.
- (3) The Turn-About on the Marne, 6th-9th September.
- (4) The Check on the Aisne, 10th-15th September.
- (5) The Move to the North, 16th September-18th October.
- (6) The Struggle for the Channel Ports, 19th October-22nd November.

1. The Entry into France, 4th-22nd August

Great Britain and Germany found themselves at war from 4th August, 1914. In accordance with the terms of the military agreement arrived at some years before between the French and British General Staffs, the transport of the B.E.F. to France was at once taken in hand. This force, for the time being, consisted of one cavalry and four infantry divisions (in all some 100,000 men), the remaining two divisions of the force being temporarily held back for home defence. These were shipped over from Southampton or other ports on our south coast to ports of disembarkation at Havre, Rouen and Boulogne, in the week from 12th to 17th August, and concentrated in the area Maubeuge-Le Cateau, in accordance with an agreement arrived at between General Joffre, the French Commander-in-Chief, and Field-Marshal Lord French, commanding the B.E.F. The latter's orders from his Government were that he was to support and co-operate with the French to prevent or repel the hostile invasion and restore Belgian neutrality, but that he was to be in all respects an independent commander, and was not to run the risk of any undue loss or wastage in his small force. The concentration of the B.E.F. was completed on 20th August, just at the moment when the French and German armies were about to clash all along the line in the great Battle of the Frontiers.

The great German advance through Belgium had, as we have previously seen, driven the Belgian army back into Antwerp, and the right wing was now heading southwards towards the line of the Sambre eastwards from Namur, which Lanrezac's Fifth French Army on the right of the B.E.F. was moving up to secure. Joffre,

who had no conception that the Germans were hurrying forward no fewer than thirty-four divisions in this area against the twenty of Lanrezac and the B.E.F., had given these armies the mission of striking at and turning the German right, by a wheel to the north-east, while his centre, in the Ardennes, simultaneously struck at and broke through the hostile forces in that sector, where he believed them to be weak. When, therefore, on the evening of the 22nd the heads of columns of the B.E.F. reached the line of the Mons-Conde canal, its role was still expected to be an offensive one, and there was no idea of the great superiority of the hostile forces in its front. In actual fact the whole of von Kluck's First German Army (fourteen infantry and three cavalry divisions) was advancing against us; while to the east Lanrezac's Fifth French Army, between which and the B.E.F. effective liaison had not yet been established, was already fighting a losing battle against von Bulow's Second German Army along the line of the Sambre between Namur and Thuin.

2. The Great Retreat, 23rd August-5th September

Fortunately for the B.E.F., the Germans as yet knew nothing of its presence in their front, and von Kluck, continuing his southward advance on the 23rd, unexpectedly encountered our forces on the line of the Mons-Conde canal. His attack, in which only three of his five corps and none of his cavalry took part, fell entirely on our II Corps on the left of the line, and by evening had progressed little beyond the canal crossings. But on our right the French Fifth Army its right menaced by the sudden appearance of von Hausen's Third German Army on the Meuse south of Namur, and by the defeat of the French centre in the Ardennes, had been forced to commence its retreat; and French, realizing his own isolation and the full weight of the enemy forces before him, also began his withdrawal on the morning of the 24th. Apart from some rearguard fighting on the left wing, there was little pursuit, as von Kluck lost time in bringing up the remainder of his forces for a resumption of the attack on the Mons position, where he believed us to be holding on. The B.E.F. reached the Bavai area that night, and there, under orders to continue its retreat next day, divided in two to pass on either side of the dense forest of Mormal, the I Corps on the right moving via Landrecies, the II and the cavalry on the left via Le Cateau. Von Kluck, now realizing the position, followed hard after, but it was not until nightfall that he once more got in touch with them; there were sharp rearguard actions in the right at Landrecies, and on the left at Solesmes where our II Corps, which during the day, had been reinforced by a new division, the 4th, from England, was so closely engaged that many of its units only got back to their bivouac areas between Cambrai and Le Cateau very late—so late, indeed, and so exhausted that Smith-Dorrien, commanding the

corps, informed G.H.Q. that he could not continue the retreat at dawn as ordered, and secured permission to stand and fight next day to check the hostile pursuit.

On the 26th, after holding off the attack of the German cavalry and three corps till midday, Smith-Dorrien drew off, with heavy loss but unbroken, and got clear away; by the evening of the 27th he was safely behind the line of the Somme about Ham. Von Kluck had believed all along that our line of retreat lay to the west; and the pursuit was thus led off on a false trail, which brought it in the next few days in contact with the new French Sixth Army (Maunoury) which Joffre was forming on his extreme left wing about Amiens for an eventual counter-offensive. This new army was caught in the act of assembly and driven back southward; but the respite from pursuit was of great value to the B.E.F., the two corps of which safely re-effected their junction on the 29th behind the Oise, on the line St. Gobain-Noyon; only the cavalry were engaged from time to time with pursuing German horsemen.

Unfortunately the British Commander-in-Chief, disturbed by the losses in his force, and by the continued retreat of the French on his flanks, was at the moment desirous only of avoiding further fighting. He declined to give effect to an undertaking given by the I Corps to co-operate in the counterstroke by Lanrezac's army at Guise on the 29th; on the 30th he continued his retreat behind the Aisne; and on 1st September only the personal intervention of Kitchener dissuaded him from ordering a withdrawal out of the line altogether. The Germans now once more appeared on our heels, and we had to fight three fierce little rearguard actions at Néry, Crépy and Villers Cotterets before we could get clear again. Von Kluck now turned his energies to an attempt to cut off the retreat of the French Fifth Army, and the B.E.F. completed the last stage of its withdrawal across the Marne and Grand Morin undisturbed. On the night of 5th September it stood on the line Rozoy-Brie Comte Robert, under orders to continue its retreat beyond the Seine on the morrow. Its retirement had carried it back 200 miles in thirteen days; it was very tired, short of food and sleep, and had lost heavily; but as the events of the next few days were to show, its morale was still high and it was still formidable.

3. The Turn-About on the Marne, 6th-9th September

On the night of 4th September, Joffre, at the urging of Gallieni, the Governor of Paris, had seized the opportunity afforded by the south-eastern swing of the German right to order a general counter-offensive. Von Kluck, believing the B.E.F. out of action, had struck in to get in rear of the French Fifth Army's left, thus exposing his own flank to a blow from Paris, where Maunoury's Sixth French Army had concentrated. On the 5th, this army moved out and struck the German flankguard on the Ourcq; next morning the

battle opened on the whole front as far east as Verdun. Joffre had secured French's promise of co-operation, but it was not possible for the B.E.F. to turn about and get into action before the 6th, by which time von Kluck had hurried the bulk of his army to the aid of his flankguard, leaving only cavalry to hold the gap between him and his left-hand neighbour, Bulow. Their resistance and the difficulties of the ground considerably slowed up the B.E.F.'s progress; but the passage of the Gd. Morin was forced on the 7th, and that of the Pt. Morin on the 8th, and by the 9th we had crossed the Marne and were well into the gap between Kluck and Bulow. The latter, in conjunction with Hentsch, the representative on mission of the German High Command, lost heart and ordered his army back, and Hentsch, going on to Kluck's headquarters, induced him to conform. By the evening of 9th September the B.E.F.'s advance had occasioned the withdrawal of the whole German right wing, and the movement quickly spread to the whole front. The decisive battle of the Marne was over and the great initial German offensive had ended in failure.

4. The Check on the Aisne, 10th-15th September

Hopes of a decisive success and a far-reaching and rapid German retreat ran high among the Allies, but their pursuit was not effective in pressing or hurrying the retiring enemy, who succeeded in reuniting his divided forces on the Aisne. The B.E.F., advancing by Fère-en-Tardenois and Braisne, on 12th September reached the south bank of that river from about Bourg to Vailly and found itself faced with an enemy once more standing to fight. But there were still gaps in the hostile front, and into one of these the I Corps, during the general attack on the 13th, forced its way, only to see it closed in its face by the timely arrival of a fresh German corps from Maubeuge. At the close of the day not only the B.E.F. but the French on either flank of it were definitely checked; and all along the front both sides set to work to entrench the positions they had gained. The era of open warfare had come to an end, and that of trenches opened, to continue for over three years.

5. The Move to the North, 16th September-10th October

During the latter half of September and the early part of October, while the battle front from the Aisne eastward was solidifying, both French and Germans on the western flank were engaged in the so-called "Race to the Sea"; really a succession of attempts by each side to outflank the other by continued extension of its line northwards. Meanwhile, the Germans, having brought forward their siege train, proceeded to invest Antwerp, where the Belgian army had taken refuge, and by 9th October, despite the aid of a British naval brigade, had forced its surrender. The Belgians, their line of retreat kept open by Allied forces, including the British 7th Division,

newly landed at Zeebrugge, succeeded in making their escape westward to the line of the Yser, on which they again stood fast.

In accordance with an agreement between French and Joffre that at the first opportunity the B.E.F. should once more take its place on the left of the Allied line, the British II and III Corps, moving by train, and the Cavalry Corps by march route, were now arriving in the north, with the I Corps close behind. They were only just in time to fill the gap between the left of the French Tenth Army west of Bethune and the Belgian right at Dixmude, towards which were already heading a strong German cavalry force and four newly raised reserve corps—young and enthusiastic, if only partially trained, volunteers. But the true menace of the situation was not yet realized, neither by French and Foch, appointed by Joffre to co-ordinate Allied action in the north, who were in high hopes of being able to turn and sweep down in rear of the right flank of the German line, towards the line of the Lys between Menin and Ghent; nor by the German High Command, which planned to cut off the Belgian army from its allies and secure possession of the western Channel ports. Neither side could achieve its offensive aims. There ensued a fierce encounter battle on a line west of Bethune—Armentières—Ypres—Dixmude—the Yser, which lasted from mid-October to mid-November and ended, as had the fighting on the rest of the front, in stalemate and trench warfare.

6. The Struggle for the Channel Ports, 19th October—22nd November

The course of the First Battle of Ypres can be only briefly described. As French reinforcements reached the field it became in due course more of a French and less of a British battle, yet one in which the heaviest pressure and the severest losses fell upon the B.E.F., and finally wasted it away to nothing. Throughout its duration, while the Allied commanders thought and spoke only of the assumption, continuance, or renewal of the offensive, their troops heavily outnumbered and outgunned, were in fact fighting stubbornly on the defensive. On more than one occasion during the two fiercest periods of the German offensive—the so-called battle of Gheluvelt, from 29th October to 2nd November, and the first attack by the Prussian Guard at Nonne Boschen, on 11th November—the enemy succeeded in breaking into, but not through, the thinning Allied line of defence, established on the front Givenchy—West of Aubers—East of Armentières—Ploegsteert—Messines—Wytshaete—Hollebeke—Zandvoorde—Gheluvelt—Zonnebeke—Lange-marck—Bixchoote—the Yser Line, and on or about these localities the battle finally came to rest, and the exhausted combatants dug in. By this time the B.E.F. had grown to a paper strength of ten and a half infantry and four cavalry divisions; but the original force had

completely disappeared; of the 100,000 men who had landed in France three months before, 90,000 had become casualties.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER READING

The chief authority for these operations is, of course, the first two volumes of our Official History. General Maurice's *Forty Days in 1914*, which is in parts out of date, and in any case carries the story only to the end of the Battle of the Marne, is the best of the unaccountably small number of briefer narratives of the campaign.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. The instructions given by Kitchener to French as to the mission of the B.E.F., in August, 1914, have been frequently criticized on the ground that they cramped the latter's liberty of action unduly, and rendered his relations with the French, which were bound to be somewhat uneasy, even more difficult than they would normally have been. It is probable that the instructions did, in fact, have this effect; but it is hard to see how they could have been better worded in the circumstances then prevailing. The Government was quite right in stressing French's responsibility to them for the safety of his small and very precious army; and they were bound also to make clear his independent position *vis-à-vis* his allies. The cautionary phrases as regards care in incurring losses might perhaps have been given less prominence; but any British commander who takes the field in a future European war may expect to receive instructions very similar in substance, if not in phrase and tone, to those issued on this occasion; for they reflect faithfully the peculiar conditions under which our intervention in any such war is bound to take place. That they exercised in some respects an unfortunate influence on French's exercise of his command must be admitted; but the cause of this is to be found principally in the inherent difficulties of the British Commander-in-Chief's position, rather than in the wording of his instructions from the Government.

2. The Allies' operations in these first few weeks of the war undoubtedly suffered from the defective co-operation between them. This was primarily due to the fact that, as stated by one observer, the two armies did not speak the same military language. It was, it must be added, due in part also to the fact that few individuals in either army spoke each other's language at all; this was especially unfortunate in the case of French and Lanrezac, who developed a mutual personal antipathy at the time of their first meeting. Neither French nor British, in fact, knew or cared to know before the war very much of their neighbours' national ways and mentality; while to this was added mutual divergencies of view on matters of dress, discipline, and military methods—all fruitful

sources of lack of sympathy and misunderstanding. To add to these general causes making for faulty co-operation, there came the great strain of the first unhappy days of the great retreat, the sudden collapse of exaggerated hopes, the realization of failure and defeat, and the natural search for a scapegoat, whom every ally so easily tends to find in another. Liaison between the B.E.F. and its neighbouring armies appears to have been inadequate from the first; and though the personal relations between French and Joffre were usually cordial, the fact they were co-equal and independent commanders could never be lost sight of by either. The events of 1914 only go to prove the virtual impossibility of perfect inter-allied co-operation without a united command; but it was not till 1918 that all had sufficiently learnt their lesson for this solution of the difficulty to be possible.

3. The great retreat, as far as the B.E.F. is concerned, showed clearly the comparative ease with which, under modern conditions, a partial action can be broken off, and the enhanced difficulties confronting the pursuer. When faced by present-day weapons at Mons, and again at Le Cateau, the defenders were able to take heavy toll of their assailants and then to withdraw safely, almost at their leisure, even in face of very superior numbers, and without awaiting the shelter of darkness, leaving the enemy so ignorant of their disappearance that his orders for next day envisaged the continuance of the attack on their abandoned position. It is true that in each case the Germans' information was at fault and led them into erroneous preconceived ideas as to our position, intentions, and line of retreat; it is also true that they failed to make the best use of their superior cavalry to gain and maintain touch with us throughout, and that air reconnaissance appears hardly to have been even attempted on their side. But that the comparative impotence of the pursuit was due less to German errors than to more general causes may be deduced from the fact that the Allies, when it came to their turn to undertake the role after the Marne, had exactly the same experience, and were unable seriously to molest the enemy's retreat, or prevent him re-establishing himself on the first available favourable line for defence. Modern weapons, by rendering it more difficult than ever before for an assailant to ascertain what degrees of resistance he is up against, or to drive an attack home swiftly even against an inferior adversary, have, therefore, much facilitated the hitherto difficult task of rearguard fighting and delaying action.

4. French's management of the retreat of the B.E.F., which in itself is rightly esteemed a highly creditable feat of arms, has given occasion for considerable criticism; it has indeed been unkindly said that G.H.Q. led the retreat rather than conducted it. It is certainly true that throughout much of its course he and his staff seem to have been somewhat out of touch with the general situation

and the conditions of the troops, and that, to judge from the operation orders which have since been published, much that one would expect normally to be laid down by G.H.Q. was left to the decision of, or to mutual arrangement between, corps and lower formations. Moreover, as a result of lack of information, a few unfortunate personal experiences, and certain exaggerations in casualty returns, the British Commander-in-Chief gained an unduly pessimistic impression as to the physical and moral condition of his command, which had an unhappy influence on his conduct of the later operations and his relations with his allies. These criticisms perhaps allow insufficient weight to the great difficulty, even in the most favourable circumstances, of controlling a prolonged general retreat under pressure. It must also be remembered that neither French nor his staff had any great experience of the handling of large bodies of troops in a large-scale war, and that his peculiar relations with his allies increased the complexity of the problem. As so often before in our military history, however, the troops came to the rescue of their leaders, and were able to extricate themselves successfully from every critical situation.

5. The volume of literature on the battle of the Marne bids fair to rival that on Waterloo. The Germans have from the first given loud and general voice to their claim that it was a battle which never should have been—and indeed in reality never was—lost. "The Marne," one of them has said, "was lost by us but it was not won by the Allies." It is true that there was little serious fighting on any part of the long front, and on that of the B.E.F. in particular so little that many men doubted if there had even been a battle of the Marne. But though a tactical decision, then as throughout the whole war in the West, eluded the Allies, from the strategical point of view the decision was absolute and of far-reaching, indeed of vital importance. It marked the failure of the German effort to snatch victory from a superior but unready host of enemies, on which rested her best, if not sole, hope of achieving her war objects; not for three and a half years was she able to renew that effort, and then only in the form of a gamble, so perilous as to prove in the end fatal. From the Allies' point of view the result was a negative one only. The enemy was foiled, not beaten. The Marne was merely a local counter stroke which had put a term to his victorious progress; he still held great gains, which could be wrested from him only by an immensity of toil and blood. Nevertheless, the battle marks a clear and definite turning-point in the war; in the same manner as Gettysburg in the American Civil War, it denoted the high-water mark of a turned and henceforward ebbing tide, the nearest that the defeated side ever came to victory.

6. It is a commonplace of French comment on the Battle of the Marne that the B.E.F. was slow to seize the opportunity of forcing its way into the gap between Kluck and Bulow, and that thereby

the decisive results which were within reach were lost. This view seems to be the exact opposite of the truth; indeed it may be paradoxically affirmed that it was really this alleged slowness which emboldened the enemy to denude this gap of all but cavalry, and thus render our decisive penetration possible. But even the criticism of our action seems of doubtful justification; and if we consider the great mobility and fire power—as distinct from mere numerical strength—of the forces opposed to us, the difficult nature of the country, heavily wooded and traversed by three unfordable rivers, the heavy exertions and losses undergone in the last few weeks, and the general obscurity of the situation, we shall hardly reckon as slow progress the average rate of nine miles a day, which the B.E.F. actually attained over the four days from 6th to 9th September. As we have already seen, the delaying power of the defence has been greatly increased by modern developments, and in these operations on the Marne we have yet another example of this truth. As it chanced, the B.E.F. was exactly so placed as to be enabled to bring about the decision of the battle, and even if it be admitted that this decision came about much less by reason of its action than from the effects of the menace of its further advance on the resolution of the enemy commanders, it may well be maintained that this is the cheapest and not the least effective means of bringing about a military decision.

7. The Battle of the Aisne affords one of the most striking examples in history of the fortune of war. It is now known that the German High Command had no firm and preconceived intention of making a definite stand on that line, which was occupied only in very hurried fashion, with wide gaps between formations. Into one of these gaps, held only by cavalry and second line units, the I Corps of the B.E.F. actually thrust itself during the course of the battle, and the road lay clear to the rear of the enemy, who was already contemplating a further retreat to the Laon-la Fère line. At this moment the opportune arrival of a fresh corps from the siege of Maubeuge enabled the gap to be closed, and not for four years did such a chance again offer itself to the Allies. How easily the matter might have gone otherwise! Had Maubeuge been able to hold out for another few hours; had the corps commander not hurried his men at their best speed to the decisive part of the battlefield; had the Allies been a trifle quicker to see and exploit their fleeting moment—who can tell how the future course of events might have been affected! It is hard to come to any other verdict than that fortune was unkind to the Allies; and the episode may serve to remind us once more that war is the domain of the unexpected, that victory and defeat hang on a mere throw of the dice, and that the commander on whom success has smiled often owes little less to his luck than to his skill.

8. The question of the timeliness of the transfer of the B.E.F. to

the north has been considerably discussed. That it was desirable at some favourable opportunity to lighten the existing complication of the Allied communications and supply problem by bringing the British nearer to their base by moving them to the left wing is obvious; but a time of pressure, when every moment saved in the transport of troops to that flank might be of vital importance, was hardly the most suitable to choose for such a shift, and one cannot believe that a supreme unified Allied commander with a free hand would have ordered it at such a juncture. Here again, however, fortune took a hand in the game. Had the B.E.F. arrived in the north soon enough to prevent the siege of Antwerp, it might have been possible to establish the Allied front more favourably for defence and for ultimate offence on a line east of Lille and along the Scheldt, with the left on that fortress. Had it arrived only a few days earlier than it did, Foch's and French's offensive projects might have been carried out far enough only to expose the B.E.F. to a deadly counterstroke which must have given the enemy the western Channel ports. Actually it came up far too late to achieve any decisive success, but only just too late to escape a probably disastrous failure.

9. Napoleon remarked at St. Helena that a victorious general was lucky to be given even a half share of the credit for his victories, "for after all it is the army that wins the battle." Never was this dictum more true than of the First Battle of Ypres. It is curious to observe how the minds of Foch and French were throughout governed by the idea of the offensive to be assumed or reassumed at all costs, all the while that the fighting troops were hard put to it merely to hold their positions in the face of great odds. In the existing circumstances no offensive on the part of the Allies was really possible, nor could it have brought about any decisive results; and this the subordinate leaders and the troops themselves must have realized. From the time when the battle was really joined, the role of the subordinate commanders was confined to patching up the thin front, wherever it appeared likely to crack, with whatever material lay to hand; the task of the troops was to defend the swampy enclosed ground where they stood, day after day, against repeated attacks, delivered by superior numbers under cover of heavy artillery, mortars and grenades, to which little effective counter was possible. It was thanks to their constancy and skill that their positions were maintained and the German drive for the Channel ports was successfully held at arms' length.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

1. Do you consider that the area of employment selected for the B.E.F. in 1914 was the best possible in the circumstances?
2. "Detailed accurate and timely information is essential to

success in war." (F.S.R. II, 29.) Comment on this in the light of events from this campaign.

3. "The ultimate overthrow of the enemy demands offensive action." [F.S.R., II 8 (v).]

"The offensive must not be assumed merely for its own sake." (F.S.R. II, 25-3.)

What light is thrown by the events in August-September, 1914, on the application of the above maxims?

4. Do you consider that the possession by the B.E.F. of present-day weapons and equipment would have enabled it to play a more effective role at the Marne?

5. Do you consider that the successful defence of the Ypres Salient was worth the price paid for it?

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. When war broke out in August, 1914, the role of the B.E.F. and its area of concentration, though they had formed the subject of discussion, between the British and French staffs, had not been definitely settled. The French hoped to see us on the left of their line in any future war, and when the matter came up for decision the general opinion was that their desires should be given effect to, as was actually done in the event. Another proposal, however, was that the B.E.F. should be sent to Belgium and unite with the Belgian Army in Antwerp, and from there operate on the flank and rear of the expected hostile advance.

There may be much to be said for this proposal if we consider it in the light of after events. The Germans, as they showed by their anxiety as regards the movements of Aston's force which landed at Ostend, were very nervous as to their right flank and the possibility of our intervention from that direction; and the Belgian operations, both before and after their withdrawal to Antwerp, would have been facilitated had they been able to count on our speedy assistance. We should, however, have had to disembark at Ostend and effect our junction with them by march route, and by reason of the speed of the German advance might have found ourselves cut off from them, isolated, and in a dangerous situation. The proposal certainly had great possibilities; but in view of our virtual commitments as regards the French, it was hardly possible to go directly contrary to their views as to the employment of the B.E.F., the absence of which from the main theatre might well, as it turned out, have lost the war for the Allies in the first few weeks of the campaign.

2. Lack of information on both sides as to the situation was noticeable on many occasions during the campaign, and exercised a great effect on the operations.

From the first the Germans seem to have known very little about the B.E.F. They were unaware of its presence in the theatre of war until they encountered it in force at Mons; and their battle disposi-

tions on that day were unhappily influenced by a false report as to the approach of new hostile forces (believed to be British, actually French) against their right and rear. They believed our line of communications to run west instead of south; this misconception threw out of gear their plan of battle at Le Cateau, and led them to pursue next day in a false direction. After this the B.E.F. was apparently entirely lost to their view, and was believed to be out of action for good until it reappeared again at the decisive moment on the Marne.

It is obvious that this lack of accurate information on the German side enabled the B.E.F. to escape from more than one difficult situation during the retreat.

But the whole story of the campaign teems with examples of the difficulty of obtaining accurate information and the far-reaching results of failure to do so. Joffre's erroneous beliefs as to the direction and strength of the main hostile offensive in the first weeks of war brought defeat and all but disaster to his armies and to the B.E.F.; while Moltke's failure to discover and appreciate the danger to his right flank from Paris in the early days of September was the prime cause of his defeat at the Marne. These are only the most important of many instances in which faulty or deficient information had a very great effect on the whole course of the campaign.

3. At the opening of the Great War the training manuals of every belligerent army laid great stress on the advantages of the offensive, and all were imbued with the doctrine that only by attack could a victory be achieved. The Germans had ever since 1870 been the apostles of the offensive; the French, in the few years preceding the war, had professed a sort of mystical faith in it, divorced from reason, to doubt which was nothing less than military heresy; and even in our army, whose historic victories were almost all won on the defensive, the same tendency showed itself. Consequently the opening battles of the war were true encounter battles, fought out by either side rushing to attack its adversary before it could be attacked itself and so lose the priceless advantages of the offensive. All this, as bitter experience soon proved, rested on a misconception of the true strength of the defence, and an under-rating of the difficulties of pushing an attack home under modern conditions; and to assume the offensive merely for its own sake was shown to be an even surer passport to defeat and severe loss than to allow oneself to lose the initiative and be forced to resort to a defensive attitude. The restoration of the superiority of the attack over the defence could be achieved only after the accumulation on its side of every form and means of material and moral superiority in great profusion; and it is curious to note that, though today no army any longer enjoys this great wealth of offensive equipment, the superior virtues of the attack still figure as prominently as ever in all our text-books and manuals.

4. In view of the fact mentioned in the last few lines of the preceding answer, it seems that little advantage would have accrued to the B.E.F. on the Marne had it been fighting in 1952 instead of in 1914. But even had it been armed and equipped as in 1918 with strong artillery and machine-gun units, tanks, smoke, shell, and gas, it is doubtful whether these adjuncts would have much assisted it to speed up its progress. The enemy would still have had greater mobility on his side; the country, which favoured defence, being blind and heavily wooded, would have limited the effect of machine-gun and artillery fire; the successive river lines would have afforded great hindrance to tank movement; and though the judicious use of smoke-shell and gas might have been of local value, these weapons would probably have been even more effective in the hands of the enemy, as they presumably would have been had the B.E.F. possessed them.

Even had the B.E.F. consisted entirely of mechanized or motorized units, the narrow limits within which it had to work would have crippled its powers of mobility so heavily as to render them of little value; to gain much advantage from these, it would have had to be employed in the flank rather than in the centre of a long battle front. The Battle of the Marne would then have taken a new form altogether, and it is interesting to consider how a modern Joffre might try to fight it, if he had at his disposal a B.E.F. with a rate of movement based not on that of the foot soldier but of the motor vehicle.

5. From a purely defensive point of view the Ypres Salient was not of vital importance to the Allies; and it may well be that had they elected from the first to stand to the west of it on the Yser line, the defence would have been easier, less costly, and no less effective for every tactical and strategic purpose. A bridgehead to the east of the canal line was certainly a useful preliminary to any eventual attempt to advance the Allied line in this area; but again, had such not existed in 1917, for the disproportionately expensive battles of Passchendaele there might have been substituted an effort in some less unpromising sector, where success would have had results farther reaching and less hardly won. Ypres, once occupied and so dearly paid for, became, however, a gage of victory of a value measured more by its moral than by its purely material value. From this primary point of view the question of its retention or surrender had, at the time, to be judged, and the importance of considerations of this nature in a war of nations must not be underestimated.

THE THIRD AFGHAN WAR, 1919

I. THE OPERATIONS

THE Third Afghan War may be divided into three phases:

- (1) The fighting in the Northern Sector to the Armistice, 6th May–3rd June.
- (2) The fighting in the Central and Southern Sectors, 26th May–3rd June.
- (3) The unrest among the Border Tribes, 3rd June–8th August.

1. The Fighting in the Northern Sector, 6th May–3rd June

The primary cause of the outbreak of the third of our wars with Afghanistan was the insecure position of the new Amir Amanulla, who, having recently been placed on the throne by the war party, decided to placate them by a descent on India. For this the omens seemed favourable; for India was racked with internal unrest, and her forces were still weak and weary from the strain of the Great War, and were rapidly being reduced in numbers by demobilization. Amanulla entered into relations with the heads of the border tribes on both sides of the Frontier and with the Indian revolutionary chiefs, and concerted a common movement for the spring of 1919. In April, therefore, the Punjab flamed up into rebellion; in the first week in May Afghan troops concentrated in force in the Khyber area, and war broke out.

The British forces on the Frontier were at the moment incomplete, much below establishment, and of somewhat inferior military value, owing to the dispatch of the cream of the Army overseas in the course of the Great War just terminated. There was also a serious shortage of transport. The Regular forces available were organized into the North-West Frontier Force (General Barratt) of two divisions, three independent brigades, and three cavalry brigades on the Khyber front, and the Baluchistan Force (General Wapshare) of one division and one mounted brigade on the southern front, with a further G.H.Q. reserve, of one division, two mobile brigades, and one cavalry brigade, held in readiness at peace stations in rear. The Frontier itself and the tribal territory were watched by locally raised levies and militia, and by Frontier constabulary—all irregular forces of little military value.

Against these the Afghan regular army, some 50,000 men in all, was of decidedly inferior quality; but the tribesmen, who were expected to rally to it in considerable force on any initial success, could furnish a numerous body of formidable fighting men. The

bulk of the army was assembling in the northern area, ready for offensive operations along the front from Chitral to the Tochi Valley, only a detachment being in the southern area about Kandahar.

The Afghan forces at Bagh, facing Landi Kotal, lost their best chance of success by failing to attack in the days immediately following the declaration of war, while our garrison there was still weak; by 9th May we had assembled two brigades there, but our first attempt to drive the enemy from his position was repulsed. A serious rising in Peshawar necessitated the temporary retention of the next batch of reinforcements to deal with it; but on the 11th the attack on the Afghans at Bagh was renewed, an additional brigade having in the meantime become available, and their position was carried all along the front, heavy losses being inflicted on them. They fell back on Jelalabad, and it was decided to push forward and occupy Dakka with a cavalry brigade. This was successfully effected; but a further advance on Girdi was checked, and the cavalry were driven back to their camp, where they were shut in; infantry had to be hurried up to their aid from Landi Kotal and drove off the enemy after a stubborn fight. Meanwhile, tribal attacks had developed in the Ali Masjid area, where our reinforcements and convoys going up to Landi Kotal were attacked; the militia force, the Khyber Rifles, in occupation there showed such unreliability that it had to be disbanded, and brigades had to be sent up from Peshawar to deal with the Afridis and restore the situation. Farther to the north a small Afghan force from the Kunar Valley had entered Mohmand territory, and a tribal gathering menaced Peshawar, but dispersed before the advance of two columns sent to break it up. Meanwhile, the preparations for an advance from Dakka to Jelalabad were going forward, and the R.A.F. were displaying great and effective activity in bombing hostile concentrations and cantonment areas. All was ready for an advance, when, on 26th May, the news of the Afghan offensive in the Kurram Valley necessitated its postponement and the dispatch of troops to Kohat; a few days later, however, the enemy asked for an armistice, which was concluded on 3rd June.

2. The Fighting in the Central and Southern Sectors, 26th May-3rd June

On the central portion of the front it was early evident that the enemy intended to make their main attack. From Matun, where the hostile commander-in-chief, Nadir Khan, had concentrated a considerable force, he could strike at either the Kurram or the Tochi; the former area we could defend, but in the latter the inhabitants, the Wazirs, were ill-disposed, and it was planned, in case of attack, to evacuate all posts above Miranshah and retire to the lower portion of the valley. On 23rd May, Nadir Khan advanced

down the Kaito Valley and a serious situation at once developed; the Waziristan militia mutinied; all their posts, not only in the Upper Tochi, but in the Gomal Valley also, had to be abandoned; and the Afghans, pressing on unopposed, on 27th May laid siege to Thal, where a mixed brigade was in garrison. Reinforcements had to be hurried down from the northern front and up from the interior; on 29th May a relief column set out from Hangu, west of Kohat, and, arriving before the place on 1st June, successfully drove off Nadir Khan. The conclusion of the armistice prevented any exploitation of the victory, but a certain number of punitive expeditions in the area around Thal were necessary before order could be completely restored among the tribes, who were much unsettled by the long delay between the armistice and the definite conclusion of peace.

The fighting in the Upper Kurram meantime had been of a minor nature only, the Afghans making spasmodic attacks on the Border villages west of the Thal-Parachinar road, which were countered by raids on our part. These attacks did not entirely cease with the armistice, and the local tribes also continued intermittently turbulent; but the signature of peace on 8th August put an end to all activity in this area.

On the southern front, as we have seen, the Afghans were not in great strength, and it was decided to concentrate the bulk of our forces at New Chaman, on their most likely line of advance from Kandahar. Later on an operation was carried out against Spin Baldak Fort, a few miles to the north. Two infantry brigades and two cavalry regiments were employed, and the 600 men who garrisoned the fort were surprised and almost completely annihilated after a stubborn fight. This action quelled any desire the Afghans may have entertained of assuming the offensive in this area prior to the armistice; but the nominal cessation of hostilities was followed by a series of provocative actions on the part of the enemy and of the tribesmen working with him, to which a stop was put only by the final conclusion of peace.

3. The Unrest among the Border Tribes, 3rd June-8th August

The period of inactivity between the armistice and the peace produced a rapid deterioration of the situation as regards the Pathan tribes, whom the Amir was still instigating to hostile action. In the north our camp at Dakka was sniped at regularly by the Mohmands, and our reconnoitring parties were molested; but two successful ambushes, in which the tribesmen suffered heavily, put a stop to this latter practice. Attacks on our picquets were also frequent, and one, on 23rd July, led to a brisk little action. More serious were the Afridi operations about Ali Masjid; on 18th July a picquet was stormed and captured, and it was necessary to send a column through the Khyber to quieten the area. This was followed

by the dispatch of a force to deal with the fort at Chora, a focus of hostile action, which was effectually destroyed. Afridi bands in the Peshawar Plain were also giving trouble, and a series of drives across the Khajuri Plain were necessary before the raiders could be dispersed. To the north in Chitral, all attempts of Afghan detachments to break into the valley were beaten off by the local forces under British direction.

In the central area, apart from Waziristan, which remained a hotbed of disorder for many months, necessitating a special series of operations for its subjection, there was little hostile activity once peace had been concluded with the Amir; but in Zhob the situation was at once affected for the worse by the outbreak of rebellion in Waziristan, whence the remnants of the mutinous local forces were withdrawing to the safety of Fort Sandeman before vigorous pursuit. The Zhob country rose in sympathy; a draft making its way thither from the south was attacked and pressed hard; our posts were subjected to sniping and raids; and the fort itself was blockaded. Our arms suffered one or two minor reverses in these various affairs, but the tribesmen were gradually reduced to order; and on 19th August the siege of Fort Sandeman was raised by the arrival of a mobile column sent out from Loralai which met with no opposition. From that date serious fighting in the Zhob Valley ceased, though normal conditions were not fully restored till a month later.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER READING

The only narrative of this war with which the student need concern himself is the Official Account published by the General Staff in India, which gives full details, with maps and plans, of all the operations.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. At first sight it would seem that the Third Afghan War, considered as a military operation, was neither so dramatic nor so instructive as the two which had preceded it. In 1842—certainly after many vicissitudes and one of the worst disasters in British military annals—and again in 1878, we had forced our way to the hostile capital, replaced the reigning Amir by our own nominee, and successfully made evident the superiority of our arms, to the great and lasting benefit of our prestige throughout the East. In 1919, on the other hand, we achieved no great or striking military victory, and so evenly had the fortune of war fallen that the Afghan people could actually be persuaded by their rulers that Afghanistan had this time defeated their former conquerors. It must be remembered in this connection that the war was only in its very earliest preparatory phase, as compared with the former campaigns, when the Amir

put an end to it by asking for and accepting our terms; and that to have pursued our operations farther would have profited us in no way politically, and would have entailed a sustained military effort of which India's resources were at the time barely capable. By all the usual criteria of military success we had won, and Afghanistan had lost, the war, when the armistice placed us in a position to enforce our own terms of peace. Nevertheless, the Eastern imagination, undazzled by any spectacular victory on our part, felt some doubt as to the reality of a success so impalpable; and the legend that the Third Afghan War was a British failure became widespread, and not in the East alone.

2. The campaign, in so far as it developed, exemplified clearly the peculiar difficulties of operations across the North-West Frontier against Afghanistan. Our real foes were less the indifferent Afghan regular forces than the hordes of turbulent and warlike tribesmen, who infested all our routes of advance and menaced all our lines of communication as we pushed forward. It was to the task of dealing with them that the energies of the bulk of our forces were devoted, and their hostility and boldness increased with every day that passed without any advance or striking success on our part. The failure of our arrangements for covering the concentration of our field army by irregular local levies placed us in an awkward position from the first, and gave the signal for the widespread tribal risings, which gave us more trouble than the Afghan War itself, and were not subdued for many months. In times of excitement on the Frontier it is clear that tribal trouble must always be expected and can be prevented from spreading only if military action is sure and swift. All our recent policy—road-making, garrisoning tribal areas, increased use of armoured fighting vehicles and of aircraft for punitive purposes—has been directed to enabling us to deal at once with the first signs of trouble; and in that respect at least the somewhat expensive lessons of the Third Afghan War have been well and truly learned.

3. The tactical lessons of the war went to prove the soundness of the doctrines on which the methods of the Indian Army are based; and such failures as occurred were due in the main to faults of execution, only to be expected in the imperfect state of efficiency of the Army at that time. The value of the mobility and moral effect of cavalry wherever they can be used against the tribesmen; the even greater value and yet larger potentialities of armoured cars on ground not completely impassable to them; the usefulness of artillery, especially the howitzer, and of machine guns in giving to infantry that organized fire support which so facilitates movement in attack and defence; all or most of these had been fully realized, and attempts had been made to inculcate them into both commanders and troops. The main reason for the absence of any decisive tactical success on our part lay less in the faultiness of our doctrine

than in the low standard of training and efficiency to which war and its after-effects had inevitably reduced the Indian Army of 1919; for, as the Official History wisely comments, "unless troops have attained a high degree of training, and have developed confidence in themselves and their leaders, they cannot be employed to full advantage on the North-West Frontier or in Afghanistan."

4. From the administrative point of view also the Third Afghan War raised some new and peculiar difficulties. From the first moment improvisation was necessary to an extent never before known; and at the same time the demands on the supply and transport services, by reason of the necessity for additional equipment, the provision as necessities of what had formerly been regarded as luxuries, and the increased consumption of ammunition by artillery and machine guns, attained very large dimensions. The Frontier railways were incompletely equipped, and communication in many places was precarious; the water supply in many areas was inadequate for the number of personnel and animals that had to be provided for; the climatic conditions rendered it necessary to adopt an increased scale of rations, which, however, it was rarely possible to furnish to the forward area in full. To add to all these difficulties, a violent outbreak of cholera, "the most extensive and sudden that has occurred in Frontier warfare," took place in June and July in all the northern area of operations, and at one time threatened completely to immobilize the forces. It is very much to the credit of the responsible authorities that all these manifold difficulties were so far successfully overcome that it was possible to place in the field a force far larger than any previously employed on the North-West Frontier, in a space of time measured not as before in months, but in weeks, and to maintain it there until the campaign had been pushed to a victorious conclusion.

5. None the less the combined effect of these multifarious causes was to reduce the mobility of our forces to such a low ebb as to deprive us of the possibility of achieving that rapid and decisive offensive which experience has shown to be the cheapest and best passport to victory in uncivilized warfare. Our former strategic method of long and speedy advances into and seizure of hostile territory before any resistance could be organized had to be exchanged for a slow and methodical progress by short but sure stages, with all the attendant disadvantages that have been mentioned above. The problem for the future seems to be one of how best to get back to the methods which served us well in the past, without sacrificing any of the advantages of superior armament and equipment now on our side. In a word, we have to increase mobility by lightening the heavy load upon our administrative services, the capacity of which, in uncivilized warfare more than in any other, dictates the rate of strategic advance.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

1. "While the principles of war apply to campaigns in undeveloped and semi-civilized countries, the armament, tactics and characteristics of the inhabitants, and the nature of the theatre of operations, may necessitate modifications in the methods of application of these principles." [F.S.R. II, 106 (1).]

What modifications of this nature do you consider necessary in the case of a war such as the Third Afghan War?

2. "When once beaten he (the enemy) should be followed up and given no respite until all resistance is at an end." [F.S.R. II, 106 (6).]

How was it that this maxim could not be given effect to in the case of the campaign under review?

3. Discuss in the light of the events of the Third Afghan War the dictum that "A vigorous offensive, strategical as well as tactical, is always the safest method of conducting operations in North-West Frontier fighting."

4. Discuss the view that "the Third Afghan War was a half-success, and thus rather worse than a failure."

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The following modifications of the methods of application of the principles of war for operations on the North-West Frontier would seem to suggest themselves:

- (i) The principle of concentration is most difficult to observe, as the limited size of columns, and the number of protective detachments necessary, tend to encourage dissipation of force.
- (ii) This tendency can be guarded against only by strict observance of the principle of economy of force, by employing on a given task only the minimum adequate numbers, and reducing protective detachments to the lowest possible.
- (iii) Surprise is most difficult of achievement, but its moral effect, if and when achieved, is even greater than in regular warfare, and it must be constantly sought after.
- (iv) Mobility, in face of the difficulties afforded by the hilly country and narrow tracks, and the necessity for using pack transport, can be maintained only by lightening the troops' and animals' loads, and by the reduction of transport to a minimum.
- (v) The offensive, strategical and tactical, is, as we have seen, the safest and cheapest method of conducting

Frontier operations, and neglect to observe this principle will at once revenge itself and exact heavy payment.

- (vi) Co-operation between all arms loses none of its importance and is in some respects facilitated by the nature of the country.
- (vii) Security, if it is to be ensured, demands that, in the face of so cunning and formidable an enemy as the Frontier tribesman, vigilance and precautions must never be relaxed. In no form of warfare is it so necessary constantly and carefully to guard against disastrous surprise.

2. We have already reviewed some of the reasons which forbade us in the Third Afghan War to exploit such successes as we gained. The main reason, however, was that, up to the time when the armistice was signed, a decisive victory had eluded us, and all we had achieved was merely to prepare the way for the sustained offensive into Afghanistan which had always led us to decisive success in previous wars. The causes of our inability to strike a heavy blow at this first stage of the campaign are to be found in many directions—in the inferior state of training and efficiency of the Army; in the administrative difficulties raised by the concentration for the first forward move, and the inadequacy of the means available to overcome them; in the partial collapse of our scheme of Frontier protection and the consequent ill-effects on the Frontier tribes; and in the necessity for making good the first steps of our advance before proceeding to a more spectacular and decisive stage. All these causes went far to deprive our forces of the mobility which alone would have enabled them to turn the local and partial successes gained by them into the decisive victory, the exploitation of which might have put an early end to the hostile resistance.

3. The lessons of the Third Afghan War as regards the value of offensive action in this type of campaign are negative rather than positive. The chief cause of our troubles with the Frontier tribes, who, rather than the Afghans themselves, were our true foes, lay just in the fact that we were not in a position at once to assume the offensive with vigour and success, and so convince them that we were the stronger side and the right one to back. The Afghans, on the other hand, as the political aggressors, were in a position to set foot in force on our territory, and to gain or proclaim a few easy successes more apparent than real, but important enough to enlist the tribes on their side and against us. The valuable tactical results to be secured by offensive action were evidence in more than one action of the war, particularly in the relief of Thal and the capture of Spin Baldak; but for the strategical offensive on a large scale we were still unready at the termination of hostilities, and the Afghans therefore remained under the delusion that the decisive victory which had thus eluded us had graced their own

arms. Meanwhile, both sides had been able to deduce from their own experience the truth of the dictum as to the manifold advantages of the offensive in North-West Frontier warfare.

4. It is not strictly true to say that the Third Afghan War was a half-success. It had been forced upon us, at a time when we should certainly not have wished to undertake it, by a young Amir insecure on his throne, and desirous of enhancing his domestic prestige by a spectacular success on foreign soil, to be gained with the aid of the discontented elements who were already causing trouble in India. Our only object, therefore, was a negative one—to defeat this design, repel the hostile attack, and get some guarantee against any repetition of it. This object we achieved speedily, if at a comparatively high cost, and, having achieved it, came to terms with our enemy as soon as it was clear that he had abandoned his design and was anxious for peace. But the outside world, and India in particular, did not see the matter in this light. To them it appeared that we had been boldly and insolently challenged on our own soil, and that the challenger had escaped intact without our having avenged the insult. If we had not, it must be because we could not, as in former years we could and had. Our prestige suffered as a result of this war, not because we had not succeeded in our military object, but because the nature of that object and the combination of prevailing conditions, had made it impossible for that object to be achieved in a manner sufficiently spectacular to maintain our high reputation in the eyes of the outside world.

THE CAMPAIGN OF EL ALAMEIN

AUGUST 13TH—NOVEMBER 7TH, 1942.

I. BRIEF NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

- (1) The German Repulse at Alam Halfa, 13th August—7th September, 1942.
- (2) The Allied Victory at El Alamein, 8th September—5th November, 1942.

1. The German Repulse at Alam Halfa, 13th August—7th September, 1942

When in mid-August, 1942, Generals Alexander and Montgomery took over respectively the Middle East Command and the command of the Eighth Army in the Western desert of Egypt, the Allied and Axis forces were facing each other on a forty-mile front between the Mediterranean coast and the impassable Qattara depression. Marshal Rommel, the Axis Commander, had the equivalent of five German and nine Italian divisions (four of them armoured), while our XXX Corps holding the right and XIII Corps holding the left wing of the Eighth Army front comprised five infantry and two armoured divisions. The new commanders found neither the training, equipment, nor weapons of the Eighth Army troops up to the standard required for victory in either a defensive or an offensive battle, but by vigorous measures of reorganization and training, by insistence that the period of withdrawal was over and that the Alamein line must be held, and by closer integration of the army and air forces, morale was re-established, and the arrival of new tanks and other equipment began to make good the weapon superiority which the enemy had hitherto enjoyed.

At the end of August Rommel launched his expected attack, which took the form of a turning movement round the south flank of XIII Corps with a force of three German and three Italian divisions, including all his four armoured divisions. As Montgomery had foreseen, the first hostile objective was the Alam Halfa ridge, so as to roll up our line from the south. Here we had concentrated the bulk of our armour except for certain units engaged in harassing the right flank of the enemy's advance. All the enemy attacks on this ridge on 31st August and 1st September were beaten off with loss, and our counter-attacks were ordered to begin on 4th September, with the object of closing the gap in our defences through which his first penetration had been made. But even before these were launched

his retirement had begun and continued during the next three days under cover of stubborn rearguard resistance. On 7th September, with both armies back in their original positions, the battle ended in a costly failure for the Axis forces.

2. The Allied Victory at El Alamein, 8th September–5th November, 1942

Training and preparations for our forthcoming offensive were now vigorously pushed forward. A new X Corps of one infantry and two armoured divisions was formed; there were available many of the new American Sherman tanks and plenty of guns and ammunition, and the standard of training, though not as high as Montgomery wished, was considered to be adequate for a successful offensive, provided that unduly high demands were not made of the troops. The opening date of the battle was fixed for 23rd October. Montgomery planned to reverse the usual order of procedure and concentrate first on destroying the enemy's unarmoured formations while preventing his armour from interfering until this had been accomplished, when it could be destroyed later. The defences were held by two German and four Italian divisions, with two infantry and armoured divisions in reserve in two groups, one behind each wing. Our main thrust was delivered by the four divisions of XXX Corps in the north, while XIII Corps launched two holding attacks to the south. X Corps, once the front had been broken, was to pass through and hold off the enemy's armour until the remnant of his forces holding the defences had been destroyed. The initial infantry attack assaults were covered by heavy preliminary bombardment from 1,000 guns and were assisted by the 700 aircraft of the Desert Air Force; the most ingenious and careful arrangements had been made to conceal from the enemy the time and sector of the offensive; and Montgomery spoke personally to as many officers and men as possible, explaining the plan of battle and his own confidence in victory.

In the first two days our offensive achieved considerable but not decisive success; XXX Corps broke into the hostile defences and secured a bridgehead which, however, was not wide enough for the armour of X Corps to pass through; on the other hand, all counter-strokes by the enemy armour had been repulsed with loss. The process of destroying the garrisons of his defences was continued on 25th–26th October, but it became clear to Montgomery that if the momentum of the attack was not to die down, it was necessary for him to regroup his forces. XIII Corps' role in the south now became a passive one, and all its available reserves were drawn to the northern wing, where a new offensive was launched by the right wing of XXX Corps so as to force a break-out. When Rommel massed the remnant of his badly battered armour to meet this new threat, however, the direction of the decisive thrust was shifted

more to the south. This thrust, known by the code name "Supercharge," commenced on 2nd November and achieved full success; the last hostile defences were pierced, and the three British armoured divisions emerged into the open and engaged in a fierce tank battle about Tel El Aqaqir, in which what was left of the hostile armour was all but destroyed. A final thrust on 4th November consummated the defeat of Rommel's army, but it escaped complete annihilation by a rapid retreat and the abandonment of its Italian portion. An inopportune storm of rain on 7th November immobilized our pursuit for twenty-four hours, and enabled it to escape from immediate danger and embark on the long retreat which was not to end until all Italian North Africa had been lost to the Axis. It lost 30,000 prisoners and practically all its armour and guns and vehicles, and its four German divisions for the time being practically ceased to exist as a fighting force.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER READING

The despatches of Field-Marshal Alexander and Montgomery during the period are the primary authorities, and the two books, *El Alamein to the River Sangro* by Field-Marshal Montgomery and *Operation Victory* by his Chief of Staff, General de Guingand, should also be consulted. Young's somewhat over-eulogistic life of Rommel gives the German side of the story.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. The preparations for the defensive battle of Alam Halfa had to be carried through at great speed, as Rommel's attack was expected to take place soon after the changes in the Allied Commands and actually did so within a fortnight of them. Ammunition and supplies had to be pushed up to the forward area, and the 44th Division, which was reported as not available just before the battle, was hurriedly sent forward. The defences were extended and improved, new wire erected, and new minefields laid. The mobile columns in which the Eighth Army had hitherto been organized were broken up, and the troops returned to their divisions, which were henceforth to act as divisions and to fight where they stood, all thoughts and plans for further retreat being forbidden. The Alam Halfa ridge, the key of the position, was strongly fortified and garrisoned. Army and Air Headquarters, which had so far been widely separated, were brought close together by withdrawing Army Headquarters, which was too far forward for safety, to a new site beside Air Headquarters. The first steps were taken to raise the morale of commanders and troops, which had suffered from the recent succession of defeats and retreats; the mere fact that these setbacks were no longer contemplated and provided for and that, in the strenuous training now set going, all the emphasis was placed on attack, restored to them that confidence in themselves and their

leaders which Montgomery saw, and has always seen, as a primary factor making for victory.

2. The greatest care and trouble were taken before the launching of the attack at Alamein to mislead the enemy as to our true intentions. The basis of the deception was the preservation of a constant density of vehicle traffic throughout the zone of operations, so that air photographs could not record any day-to-day changes. By the pooling of transport resources and by constructing large numbers of dummy lorries, the layout and density of vehicles required in the XXX Corps sector in the north was established as early as 1st October. The substitute guns and vehicles were replaced by those of the divisions as they came into the forward area. Their move up from the rear areas was concealed by the erection of dummies there as they left. Dumps were elaborately camouflaged, and slit trenches for the assaulting infantry were dug a month before the attack was to begin. In the south a dummy pipe-line and dummy dumps were set up, so as to be apparently due to completion by the end of November; and an armoured division's wireless network was used to give the enemy the idea that our main armoured forces were being moved to the southern wing. On the night prior to the attack a feint landing behind the hostile lines was staged, so as to tie down some of the hostile reserves along the coast. On 23rd October some troops went on board at Alexandria and the ships carrying them set out in full sight of the enemy spies, but all except three or four fast craft which carried out the feint put back after dark. All these measures certainly helped to confuse the enemy and gain us tactical surprise.

3. The various decisions taken during the course of the battle of Alamein to meet the changed situation from time to time are worthy of attention. The failure of the initial XXX Corps attacks to break through the deep hostile defence belt was obvious by 24th October, and at a conference of corps commanders held in the small hours, Montgomery laid down that, though our armour should be more fully used to assist the infantry attacks, the original plan of destroying the enemy's infantry and holding off his armour must and would be adhered to. These tactics produced good results, but it subsequently became necessary to change the main axis of attack to the north, so as to complete the destruction of the isolated hostile left wing. Next Montgomery ordered a pause to regroup XXX Corps, so as to provide fresh reserves for the knock-out blow in the final phase of the battle, which was fast approaching. Finally Operation "Supercharge" was launched on 30th October, and this, after four days of fierce fighting during which the direction of the axis of the main attack had to be twice changed, ended in a wide breach being forced in the enemy front, followed by the heavy and prolonged armoured battle about Tel El Aqaqir on 3rd November and the complete defeat and disruption of Rommel's army. The

manner in which Montgomery changed his own arrangements and shifted his troops, all in accord with and in pursuance of his basic conception of how the battle was to be fought, forms a fine example of the art of generalship.

4. Most interesting perhaps of all the many points of interest in this campaign is the careful attention paid by Montgomery to the enforcement of the morale of his army. "I was determined," he says "that the soldiers should go into battle having been worked up into a great state of enthusiasm and realizing fully what was expected of them." He had personally explained to every commander in the army down to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel how he proposed to fight the battle, what issues depended on it, and what were the main difficulties likely to be encountered. In addition, he got into and remained in the closest possible touch with as many of the troops as he could meet and talk to. He was determined that they should know him not only by reputation and story, but recognize him in person. Hence he neglected no form of publicity which might assist in establishing this mutual knowledge, trust, and affection between himself and the men he commanded. Believing that victory breeds confidence and fosters morale, he was careful only to set his troops tasks which they could accomplish, and to provide them in full measure with everything which might assist them to do so. "No leader," he has written, "will long remain in the first rank unless he achieves success. Just as success is a great stimulus to morale, so nothing lowers morale as quickly as a failure, therefore there must be no failure. Great and lasting harm can be done to morale by undertaking operations for which the troops concerned are not ready or trained and which are likely to end in failure. I have therefore made it a rule to limit the scope of my operations to what can be achieved successfully."

5. Rommel's account of his repulse at Alam Halfa and his defeat at Alamein attribute them to much the same causes. At Alam Halfa he was, he says, deceived as to the strength of our positions in the south; the superiority of our Desert Air Force inflicted heavy losses and wrecked the time-table of the offensive; and the failure of promised petrol supplies from Italy hampered his army's freedom of movement. As regards Alamein, Rommel himself was not present at the beginning of the battle, though the defence scheme on which it was fought was of his devising. According to his account, the prerequisites for success—weapons, petrol and ammunition of good quality and in adequate quantity, and equality at least in the air, so as to deny the enemy unchallenged air command—were lacking on his side, and present on that of the British. The British command carried the battle through to victory, largely thanks to these factors of superiority, using its old methodical principles of tactics, showing slowness in reaction, especially in launching the pursuit, and displaying caution and little forcefulness of decision, declining time and

again to use their tanks in mass. On the other hand, their armour and infantry were well trained, and their artillery, as always, excellent; with abundant munitions, great length of range, and close liaison with the forward troops by observing officers carried in tanks, it showed great mobility and speed of reaction to the assaulting troops demands for support. The result of Alamein was decisive because the Axis army's defeat resulted in the loss of the main part of its infantry and motorized forces, which could not be replaced. These views of a brilliant and judicious-minded adversary on the causes of our decisive victory in North Africa are of great interest and deserve close study.

IV. QUESTIONS ON THE CAMPAIGN

1. What light is thrown by the Battle of Alam Halfa on the principles of the defensive battle?
2. Compare the conduct and results of the Battle of Alamein with those of a typical offensive on the Western Front in the 1914-18 war.

V. SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

1. The main disadvantages of the defensive are that the initiative has to be left to the enemy, who can choose his sector of attack and then bring against it a force superior to that which the defence can set against it. At Alam Halfa Montgomery sought to deprive Rommel of these advantages and largely succeeded. The possibilities of surprise being limited, the attacker had only two alternative plans of attack, a penetration of the front or a turning movement on the southern flank. Montgomery divined that the latter would be Rommel's plan and arranged for the selection, occupation, and strengthening of a second position of defence on the Alam Halfa ridge in rear of that wing, which the assailant could not leave on his flank and must turn aside to attack. The defenders could take constant toll of his penetration forces throughout the battle and preparations could be made for counterstrokes against their flank and rear from the northern portion of the front, which would remain intact. This plan was successfully put into effect; and the hostile attack was repulsed with heavy loss, which might have been severer still had the state of training and morale of the Eighth Army not necessitated caution in attempting to exploit the defensive success by a counter-offensive in force.

2. The circumstances of the Battle of Alamein and those of a typical Western Front offensive in 1914-18 were in some respects the same; but there were also important differences. In both cases we were faced by strongly entrenched defences which had to be attacked frontally; there was no very great advantage of force on our side; the enemy was expecting attack, and was reasonably well equipped to meet it, so that surprise and local superiority at the

point of assault could not easily be achieved. Nevertheless some degree of surprise was in fact achieved, thanks to elaborate and ingenious arrangements for secrecy and deception and to our complete superiority in the air. The plan of attack was kept flexible, so that the main effort could be switched to correspond with the changing situation. The power of our armour in attack and in pursuit was fully utilized. The air force co-operated fully with the army both in reconnaissance and in tactical work throughout the preparation for and the period of the battle. Montgomery exploited to the full his advantage of the initiative and so employed his forces as to exercise the maximum of pressure on the enemy without exhausting them, always keeping reserves in hand, providing himself with fresh ones to replace those expended, and keeping his army constantly balanced and under control, ready and with power to meet whatever move the enemy might make. When by these means victory had been achieved, the necessary reserves in the form of armour and air forces were available to make it annihilating and decisive of the campaign. Thus, if Montgomery had in some respects superior resources to those available to us in the Western Front battles of the earlier war, it was primarily to his more skilful and effective use of them that he owed his greater degree of success.

THE CAMPAIGN IN NORTH-WEST EUROPE, 1944-5

I. THE OPERATIONS

THE campaign falls into four phases, as follows:

- (1) The Landing and the Battle of the Normandy Beach-head, 6th June-24th July, 1944.
- (2) The Break-out from the Beach-head and the Liberation of France and Belgium, 25th July-15th December, 1944.
- (3) The Battles West of the Rhine, 16th December, 1944-22nd March, 1945.
- (4) The Conquest of Western Germany, 23rd March-5th May, 1945.

1. The Landing and the Battle of Normandy, 6th June-24th July, 1944

By the early summer of 1944 all the Allied preparations were completed for the invasion of North-Western Europe. The fleets and the shipping for the transport of the forces were assembled, and the Allied Air Force were gradually disrupting all the enemy's industries, supply services, and communications in France and the Low Countries. The Allied forces were under the supreme command of the American General Eisenhower, under whom the British General Montgomery was in charge of the 21st Army Group, which was to be the first to land. This comprised two armies, the British Second Army under General Dempsey, and the American First Army under General Bradley, and totalled sixteen British and seventeen American divisions. The area chosen for the first landing was the northern coast of Normandy between the Carentan estuary and the Orne, and the first object was to establish a lodgment area from Caen to the west side of the Cotentin peninsula, where forces could be assembled for the break-out. It was then proposed, after the enemy reserves had been drawn in and pinned down on the eastern flank by the British Second Army, that the American First Army should effect this break-out west of Caen, drive southwards to the Loire and then swing eastwards in a wide circle to the Seine about Paris, so as to envelop and destroy all the hostile forces west of that river. The first troops to be landed were one British and two American airborne divisions on the flanks of the landing area, followed by four British and three American divisions on the main beaches.

The German forces in Western Europe under Marshal Rundstedt

comprised forty-nine infantry and ten armoured divisions organized in four armies, with the main strength in the Pas de Calais, where our principal attack was expected. Marshal Rommel's Seventh Army had seven infantry and two armoured divisions in Normandy and five infantry and three armoured in Brittany, plus one infantry division in the Channel Islands. The coast line had been fortified, but only in linear fashion with little depth.

The landing, after being postponed for a day owing to bad weather, was successfully effected on 6th June under cover of a heavy land and air bombardment. The coastal defences were everywhere quickly overrun, but hard fighting developed as the enemy reserves were put in. However, within a week the beach-heads had been linked up and the Allies were firmly established; the build-up of material through artificial prefabricated harbours was going well, while the British on the east wing, by repeated attacks, succeeded in drawing in and engaging the German reserves as planned, and the Americans to the west cut off the Cotentin peninsula and, turning north, occupied the port of Cherbourg on 16th June. The capture of St. Lo and Caen paved the way for the next stage in the offensive—the break-out from the lodgment area by the newly formed American 12th Army Group (First and Third Armies).

2. The Break-out and the Liberation of France and Belgium, 25th July–15th December, 1944

This break-out was completely successful. While the British Second Army and the newly arrived Canadian First Army (General Crerar) continued their pressure on the line Caen–Caumont, the two American armies drove south to Avranches and then fanned out to thrust westwards into Brittany, south-east towards the Loire, and eastwards towards the Seine. The enemy fought stoutly but unsuccessfully to stem this advance; an armoured counter-thrust to break the hinge of the American advance about Avranches was checked and broken up, and the bulk of the German Seventh Army was surrounded and destroyed in the Falaise area by the First Canadian Army closing in from the north and the American Third Army from the south. By 1st September, when General Eisenhower took over control of the campaign from General Montgomery, the remnants of the German Seventh Army were being pursued to the Lower Seine by the 21st Army Group; the 12th Army Group's left was endeavouring to cut them off and force the line of the river below Paris, which had been liberated on 25th August; its right wing had reached the line of the Loire from Orleans to its mouth; and the German forces in Brittany had been driven to seek refuge behind the defences of the main seaports.

The line of the Seine was quickly forced and the Allied advance northwards and eastward continued with little opposition. In

mid-August a new landing by another Allied force, the Seventh Army under General Patch, took place about Marseilles on the southern coast of France and swept rapidly forward along the mountainous eastern French frontier zone into the upper Rhine valley. The 12th Army Group pushed out south-eastwards to link up with it about Belfort, while its centre struck due east towards Nancy and Verdun and its left wing north-east for Luxemburg and Liege and Mons. The British and Canadians also moved rapidly north-eastwards between it and the sea, their right wing moving by Amiens and Brussels to Antwerp, which fell on 4th September, while their left blockaded and stormed one after another the defended Channel ports. General Montgomery then proposed to General Eisenhower that, in view of the complete collapse of German resistance in France and Belgium, they should be given the *coup de grâce* by a rapid and powerful thrust across the lower Rhine and north of the Roer into the north German plains. General Eisenhower, however, preferred to continue the advance of the whole of the Allied armies to the Rhine on a broad front and establish bridgeheads over it, pending the opening of one of the great ports of the Low Countries, so as to shorten the long and overburdened Allied line of communication from the North Sea. But the Germans succeeded in collecting forces just sufficient to foil the British Second Army's attempt to cut off their troops in Holland by seizing the crossings over the Meuse, the Waal and the lower Rhine by airborne landings; the first two succeeded, but that at Arnhem failed. Stiff German resistance and increasing administrative difficulties brought the Allied advance to a temporary halt at the end of September on the line of the lower Meuse, the Ardennes, and the upper Moselle.

The next two months were spent by the 21st Army Group in opening up the Scheldt for the passage of ships to Antwerp by storming the defences of the islands in its estuary, in clearing up the area on the west bank of the Meuse which was still held by the enemy, and in preparing for the next stage, the forcing of the crossing of the lower Rhine. All these were successfully accomplished by mid-December, despite the bad weather and the difficulties of fighting in low-lying and waterlogged country.

The Americans had meanwhile concentrated the bulk of their forces on either side of the Ardennes, their left wing on the line of the Roer and their right in the upper Moselle and Saar valleys.

3. The Battle West of the Rhine, 16th December, 1944–23rd March, 1945

The enemy now took the Allies by surprise by launching a strong armoured offensive into the weakly held area of the Ardennes, in the hope of splitting their forces in two by a deep penetration in the direction of Liege and Brussels. For some days the position was

critical, but the stubborn resistance of the small and isolated American detachments checked his progress and enabled Allied troops to be thrown across his path to the west, while pressure on both his flanks from north and south forced him to a halt and finally compelled him to retreat to escape being enveloped and destroyed. The Allies then passed to the attack. The 21st Army Group, of which the Ninth American Army now formed part, pushed forward from the Meuse to the Roer to link up with the left of the 12th Army Group for a combined attack on the hostile forces west of the Lower Rhine between Dusseldorf and Nijmegen.

This Allied offensive, which led to the fiercest fighting of the campaign, was begun by the British and Canadians of the 21st Army Group early in February, the American Ninth Army joining in a fortnight later, when the bulk of the German defenders had been drawn off northwards to hold them. By that time resistance had so weakened that the blow proved decisive, and the enemy was forced back everywhere over the Rhine, and left in no state to resist the Allied passage, which began on 23rd March after long and thorough preparation. To the south the other American armies had also fought their way forward to the river, and the First Army surprised a passage over it at Remagen, in the stretch between Cologne and Coblenz. The German resistance was now showing such signs of weakening that final Allied victory was clearly in sight.

4. The Conquest of Western Germany, 23rd March-5th May, 1945

The line of the Rhine was forced all along its length from Nijmegen to Mainz before the end of March, and the Allied forces swept rapidly over all Western Germany from the Swiss frontier to the sea. The 21st Army Group's main axis of advance was by Rheine and Minden to the line of the Elbe about Hamburg and the Baltic coast about Lubeck; its other forces moved down the Ems and the Weser valleys to the North Sea coast, and entered Holland from the east across the Yssel. The Americans overran all the area to the south as far as the middle Elbe and the frontier of Czechoslovakia, where they linked up with the Russians advancing victoriously from the east through Berlin to the Elbe. Only sporadic resistance was met with, for the German armies were in process of dissolution; the bulk of them had been dispersed or destroyed by the end of April, when the first overtures for surrender were made by the Nazi Government. The final capitulation of Germany and all her land, sea and air forces was finally completed on 7th May, 1945. The British Empire and Commonwealth forces part in this campaign had been outstanding. Over a million men, 9,000 tanks and 6,500 guns had taken part in it. They had fought and defeated eighty-two hostile divisions, of which twenty-two had been completely destroyed; they had taken 400,000 prisoners, and captured or des-

troyed 16,000 guns and 1,400 tanks. Fourteen British and Canadian infantry, five armoured and two airborne divisions had fought under the 21st Army Group in the course of the campaign.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

The official despatches of General Eisenhower and Field-Marshal Montgomery may be supplemented by their respective memoirs, *Crusade in Europe* and *Normandy to the Baltic*. Liddell Hart's *The Other Side of the Hill*, and Speidel's *We Defended Normandy* outline the story of the campaign from the German side.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. The assault on the Normandy beaches and on the Siegfried line on the Western Frontier of Germany once more showed the weakness of long artificial defence lines against powerful and determined thrusts on a narrow front backed by all the power of modern weapons. The West Wall on the coast of France was a thin belt of works without depth, defectively designed and executed and inadequately armed and manned. Once this belt had been broken through, the Allies' superior sea and air power assured them of a secure build-up for further advance, while the destruction of the enemy's lines of communication and bridges interfered with the arrival of his reinforcements and supplies.

The Siegfried line was a much more formidable obstacle, deep, well designed, and furnished with all modern resources for defence, with good internal and rear communications and strongly held. The Allied break-through was bound therefore to be a systematic and gradual process, entailing weeks of gruelling and costly fighting, but, as with the West Wall, it proved untenable in the end before the mighty offensive strength which the Americans could bring against it.

This must not be read to mean that an attack on such formidable defensive lines as these should be undertaken without the utmost care in planning, thoroughness in preparation, and vigour and valour in execution. These are essential to victory, which in the case of the battles for the West Wall and the Siegfried line was gained primarily by the fine military qualities of the Allied officers and soldiers, and the resolution and professional ability of their leaders.

2. The Germans were largely responsible for their own defeat in Normandy. There was no central supreme command and little co-ordination between the land and air forces, while the Todt organization, which constructed the West Wall, was also independent of the military command. The exercise of that command, both before and during the operations, was hampered throughout by Hitler and his headquarters officers, who carried their interference even down to tactical details. It was apparently Hitler who decided, contrary to the views of both Rundstedt and Rommel, that

the defensive battle should be fought on the West Wall itself, and who refused to allow the reinforcement of the Seventh Army from the German forces in the Pas de Calais, where he expected a new and stronger Allied landing. He also, according to German authorities, ordered and insisted on the abortive armoured counter-stroke at Avranches, just after the American break-out from the Normandy beach-head area, and the December, 1944, counter-offensive in the Ardennes, which, though it achieved great initial success, ended in a costly failure and incapacitated the German army for further effective resistance. The German troops invariably fought well and their leadership throughout was technically competent, but not sufficiently so to counteract the material and moral factors of Allied superiority in all departments, which ensured their eventual defeat.

3. The divergent views of General Eisenhower and Montgomery on the strategy to be adopted after the victory in Normandy and the destruction of the bulk of the hostile forces west of the Rhine has already been referred to. Which was the more correct will long be a subject of controversy. The strategy adopted by General Eisenhower was the more secure, the surer, and probably the sounder from the point of view of pure strategical theory; that proposed by General Montgomery gave promise of swifter and cheaper victory, but with less certainty and more risk. It is noteworthy that he, whose methods had hitherto been so systematic though careful even to the point of caution, should have been the advocate of the more daring and dangerous strategy, but as it was never tried, no one can know whether it would have succeeded. General Eisenhower's mind was turned against it by his anxiety for the Allied rear communications, which were long and tenuous and so severely strained that he feared that the thrust, if attempted, might be brought to a halt before it could finish off the enemy. In this case, therefore, as in so many others in history, strategy was governed and limited by administration.

4. The Arnhem operation showed the limitations of airborne operations; the Battle of Normandy and the 21st Army Group's crossing of the Rhine showed their possibilities. Airborne forces have, under favourable conditions for flying and landing, great range of operation, but, once landed, have less fighting power than normal forces, owing to the fact that light armament and equipment only can be carried by air. It is therefore essential, not only for the achievement of full success but for the avoidance of undue loss and failure, that the gains of airborne forces should be rapidly consolidated by the arrival of the slower but more heavily armed ground troops. Both the Battles of Normandy and Arnhem showed the danger of airborne landings too far ahead of possible support. The lesson had been learned before the passage of the Rhine, when the airborne troops were dropped close behind the enemy forward

zone, so that they could co-operate closely in the battle and be quickly joined by the assaulting ground troops. As it becomes possible to lift heavier loads by air, this limitation on their use will no doubt diminish, and they will become able to play a more independent role with the heavier armament at their disposal.

5. The campaign involved so many specialized problems that a wealth of technical devices had to be devised to solve them. The best known of these devices were the prefabricated harbours anchored off the Normandy coast to ensure a safe and rapid build-up on the beaches. Various specialized vehicles were devised and used—tanks carrying bridges which could be mechanically launched from behind armour; mat-laying tanks to facilitate the crossing of marshy ground; tanks with ramps for the crossing of sea walls; flail tanks for wire clearing; amphibious tanks to lead the sea-borne assault; and flame-throwing tanks for use against fixed defences. Amphibious craft and vehicles were employed, not only in the first assault, but in the winter during the fighting in the waterlogged country between the Maas and the Rhine. The Armoured personnel carriers known as Kangaroos, extemporised from tanks, enabled infantry to move forward in close touch with armoured forces right into the fighting zone. The 21st Army Group found it best for purposes of training and administration to concentrate all these specialized equipments under one divisional command, which was responsible for the repair, maintenance and upkeep, and from which they were allotted to other formations as required. The essential thing is that they should be readily available at call, and in sufficient quantities for action wherever and whenever needed.

THE CAMPAIGN IN BURMA, 1942-1945

I. THE OPERATIONS

The campaign falls into five phases, as follows:

- (1) The Loss of Burma, January-May, 1942.
- (2) Minor Operations, June, 1942-March, 1944.
- (3) The Japanese Offensive in Manipur, March, 1944.
- (4) The Reconquest of Northern and Central Burma, November, 1944-March, 1945.
- (5) The Reconquest of Southern Burma, April-August, 1945.

1. The Loss of Burma, January-May, 1942

The defence of Burma against a Japanese attack in 1942 was handicapped from the first by the fact that, as it had seemed reasonably secure so long as Siam and Indo-China remained independent, an enemy attack on it had seemed a contingency which could be neglected in favour of more urgent demands on our own inadequate military resources in the Far East, so that only two weak divisions had been allotted to its defence. Moreover, right up to the date of the Japanese offensive there had been indecision as to the responsibility for Burma's defence, which was finally placed on the Commander-in-Chief, India, only after the Japanese declaration of war. General Hutton had available barely 27,000 poorly trained and equipped Indian and Burmese troops and about the same number of equally poorly armed Chinese under the American General Stilwell co-operating with him, and with practically no air support, to withstand the attack of a highly efficient force of six Japanese divisions with full air command. These first overran or drove in our small garrisons holding the Tenasserim peninsula south of Burma proper, and early in February, 1942, launched a converging attack from east and south on our two divisions holding the lower Salween river covering Rangoon. These were defeated and forced back with heavy losses and forced to evacuate Rangoon early in March; their remnants rallied about Prome, where they were reorganized into the 1st Burma Corps under General Slim. General Alexander had now taken over the command in Burma from General Hutton and found the strategic position highly unfavourable; the Japanese capture of Rangoon had cut Burma's sea communications with India, and placed the Japanese in a position to turn from the south all his possible river lines of defence.

Late in March the Japanese, after clinching their complete air superiority, advanced up both banks of the Irrawaddy and the

Sittang rivers against the Allied positions held by the 1st Burma Corps about Prome and by Stilwell's Chinese about Toungoo. Both were quickly forced back, the Chinese in particular being so hard hit as to be able to take little further part in the campaign, while the Burma Corps had difficulty in extricating itself from repeated hostile attempts at enveloping and destroying it as it fought a series of delaying actions to cover the destruction of the central Burmese oilfields between Prome and Mandalay. At the end of April our forces rallied for a new stand covering Mandalay, and Alexander realized that, in view of the Japanese superiority on the ground and in the air, Burma could no longer be defended, and that the best he could hope for was to be able to delay the hostile advance against the eastern frontier of India.

The enemy, after first breaking through the Chinese front about Taunggyi and forcing Stilwell's shattered command to retreat northwards and eastwards across the Chinese frontier, turned on the 1st Burma Corps and drove it out of Mandalay and back to the line of the Chindwin river at about Kalewa, failing, however, in repeated attempts to envelop and destroy it in the course of its retreat. As there was no means of getting vehicles across this river, only the personnel were able to continue the difficult march across the mountains separating Burma from India; fortunately there was no further hostile pursuit, and the survivors reached Tamu in mid-May, leaving all Burma in Japanese hands.

2. Minor Operations, June, 1942–March, 1944

No further action in the Burma theatre took place during the next six months, during which our Eastern Army in Assam was raised to a strength of five divisions. In December, 1942, a local offensive was launched against Akyab in the Arakan province, to be combined with an advance by Stilwell's Chinese forces in north Burma. Our movement failed after some initial success, and the Chinese operations did not take place; a raid in the rear of the Japanese lines by a specially formed force under Wingate, though it did the Japanese some damage, achieved no gain proportionate to its cost in casualties.

The remainder of the year 1943 and the early part of 1944 saw no further fighting of importance, but the command and organization of our forces were thoroughly remodelled. A new command, South-East Asia Command, under Lord Mountbatten, was set up, having under it the 11th Army Group under General Giffard; this Group's striking force in Burma comprised the Fourteenth Army (IV and XV Corps) (eight divisions) under General Slim. This faced the Western frontier of Burma on the arc Imphal–Tamu–Tiddim (IV Corps), while XV Corps was in Arakan. In north China Stilwell had a mixed force of Chinese and Americans covering the construction of a new road from India to China, starting from

Ledo in Assam. The Japanese 15th Army in Burma comprised six divisions. Both sides had offensive plans for the spring of 1944, ours being confined to renewed small-scale attacks in Arakan and in north Burma and an airborne raid by Wingate's force in the hostile rear area; that of the Japanese, far more ambitious, took the form of a large-scale attack on Manipur, preparatory to an invasion of India.

The XV Corps' attack in Arakan made some headway before being halted by a strong Japanese counterblow against its exposed left flank, which threw it on to the defensive, cut its lines of communication, and for some days seemed to threaten its complete destruction. But our forward troops, isolated in their defensive boxes, were maintained by air until our reserves could free the land routes of supply and check the hostile advance; the enemy suffered severely, and withdrew to rear positions covering Akyab. Wingate's airborne raiding force was launched early in March and for the next two months carried out extensive operations in the enemy rear in the Indaw area, the bulk of it eventually joining up with Stilwell's Chinese command for his attack on Myitkina in north Burma. These troops, fighting their way forward under great difficulties, and building the Ledo road behind them as they went, penetrated steadily down the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys and reached their objective, Myitkina, in mid-May, though it was only in August that the town finally fell into their hands.

3. The Japanese Offensive in Manipur, March, 1944

The hostile offensive in Manipur, launched in mid-March by three divisions, in all some 100,000 men, struck the three divisions of IV Corps in flank and rear and for some time placed them in a precarious position. They had to carry out a fighting retreat to Imphal, where they found themselves invested and their rear communications cut near Kohima, which also came under siege. Air supply and stubborn resistance, however, enabled both places to hold out until relief came from the advance of a new corps, the XXXIII, composed of troops sent up from Arakan and from the interior of India. This corps, pushing forward from railhead at Dimapur, drove the Japanese back southwards and eastwards, while IV Corps in its turn assumed the offensive from Imphal and closed in on them from the south. By the end of June the two corps had joined hands. The enemy suffered a costly defeat; 75,000 of his 100,000 troops who took part in the offensive were killed or died of disease and starvation, the force having been sent out lightly supplied in the confidence that it could be fed from its captures. Our battle casualties were some 40,000, and our roll of sick was still heavier, though few became permanent casualties.

The pursuit of the defeated enemy was steadily pressed and the whole area west of the Chindwin river was slowly cleared in the face

of considerable rear-guard resistance and the difficulties of the monsoon weather. By mid-September, 1944, our forces had reached the western frontier of Burma, IV Corps by way of Tiddim and XXXIII Corps by way of Tamu. The Japanese offensive against India having thus failed disastrously, it was now the turn of the Fourteenth Army to invade and reconquer Burma.

4. The Reconquest of Northern and Central Burma, November, 1944-March, 1945

In November, 1944, General Leese succeeded General Giffard in command of the 11th Army Group, which then comprised the Fourteenth Army, XV Corps, now detached from it, and the composite force in north Burma now under the American General Sultan, some nineteen divisions, in all some 625,000 men, with the support of 100 air squadrons. One of its missions, to complete the Ledo road so as to open up land communications with China, was finally effected in June, 1945, when a junction between General Sultan's command and Chinese troops from Yunnan was effected south of Bhamo, after heavy fighting. Two months later our occupation of the Lashio-Tsipaw area reopened the old Burma road into China. This completed the task of General Sultan's Northern Area Command in the campaign.

On the opposite wing, XV Corps in December, 1944, undertook the final clearing of the Arakan province and the western coast of Burma. It took advantage of its complete air and sea superiority to effect a succession of landings on the coast in flank and rear of the enemy, who had been weakened by having to send troops to the main front in central Burma. His resistance soon became disorganized, and we secured first Akyab and its peninsula, then the mainland north and east of it, and finally, after the capture of Ramree Island by a seaborne attack, the whole coastal belt as far south as Taungup. By April, 1945, all Arakan was in our hands.

Meanwhile in north-western Burma the campaign for the destruction of the main Japanese army opened early in December, 1944, with surprise crossings of the Chindwin by XXXIII Corps on the right at Kalewa and by IV Corps on the left at Sittaung. The surprise was rapidly exploited; the left wing thrust due eastwards to effect a junction with Sultan's Northern Area Command about Indaw and then swung south for Mandalay, the right wing headed direct for that city and the stretch of the Irrawaddy below it. The operations for the crossing of this river were skilfully designed to deceive the enemy, and by the end of February, 1945, XXXIII Corps had forced a passage above Mandalay and was closing in from that side, while IV Corps, which the enemy believed to be still on the left of the army but in fact now formed the right wing, crossed about Pagan and thrust a mechanized column rapidly eastwards to Meiktila on the line of retreat of the Japanese still

holding the Irrawaddy river line. This was the decisive stroke of the campaign; and the capture of Meiktila was quickly followed by that of Mandalay, which fell to a direct attack by XXXIII Corps in mid-March. With all northern and central Burma now in our hands, the way was clear for the final phase of the reconquest of the country.

5. The Reconquest of Southern Burma, April–August, 1945

This final phase was not only a fight against the enemy, but against the weather, for if full victory was to be achieved, it was essential to open up a new line of supply by the capture of Rangoon before the coming of the monsoon in early May. While IV Corps therefore pushed southwards along the Irrawaddy by way of Yenangyaung and Prome, XXXIII Corps thrust its mechanized column along the direct road from Meiktila to Rangoon via Toungoo and Pegu. Both, though they met stubborn resistance at points on their routes, made continuous progress, but when the first rains fell at the beginning of May, their heads of columns had only reached Prome and Pegu. The Japanese garrison of Rangoon had, however, been sent north to oppose them, so leaving the way open for a seaborne force from XV Corps in Arakan to land in its rear and occupy the city unopposed. Thus the race with the weather was won, and the fate of the surviving enemy forces in Burma sealed.

The remaining two months of the campaign were devoted to reaping the fruits of this victory. A new army, the 12th under General Stopford, comprising nine divisions, was left in Burma to complete the occupation of the country; the remainder of the troops were withdrawn to prepare for operations for the reconquest of Malaya, which were timed for the autumn, but proved to be unnecessary. The enemy forces shut up in the Pegu hills north of Rangoon were all but destroyed as a result of unsuccessful attempts to break out to the east, and their comrades there were being slowly forced back eastwards into the Shan hills when the surrender of Japan in August, 1945, put an end to the war in the Far East. The surrender of the widely scattered enemy remnants in Burma was signed at Lord Louis Mountbatten's headquarters in Rangoon on 26th August. The known casualties in dead inflicted on the enemy in the period from March, 1944, to the end of the war amounted to 27,000; the total of his losses is unknown, but was of course much higher.

II. NOTES FOR FURTHER READING

The official despatches and the semi-official account of the campaign published by the Ministry of Information are the best narratives of the operations at present available. The chapter in Ian Hay's *Arms and the Man*, the first of a new series of brief histories

of the various campaigns of the Second World War, may also be referred to.

III. NOTES ON SOME POINTS OF INTEREST

1. The attempt to defend Burma in 1942 was doomed from the first to be unsuccessful; and not even the highly competent and resourceful and resolute leadership displayed by Generals Alexander and Slim could counterbalance the inferiority of our forces to those of the enemy. These forces were heavily outnumbered and ill trained for the sort of warfare necessary in the swamps and jungles of Burma. The morale of the native Burmese troops was indifferent. The Chinese were second-rate troops, without adequate arms, equipment, supplies or medical services. Relations between their commander, General Stilwell, and the British Commanders were ill-defined and uneasy, and co-operation between the two leaders of the Allied army suffered accordingly. Moreover, the Japanese almost from the first had complete superiority at sea and in the air. Nevertheless this first campaign in Burma, although in itself a costly defeat, gained us many valuable months for preparing to defend the eastern approaches to India, which at this time lay virtually open to attack. By holding the enemy in Burma till the coming of the 1942 monsoon, our forces ensured that no such attack could be delivered before the following autumn at the earliest, by which time, had it come, we should have been in a reasonably good position to meet it.

2. The operations of General Wingate's airborne force in the Japanese area in the summer of 1943 made a great stir at the time, and have been much propagandized since. They certainly caused the enemy much annoyance, inflicted considerable damage on him in men and material, and for a time interfered with his communications by road and rail; they no doubt also gave a useful fillip to our morale at a time when this was at a somewhat low ebb. But as a strategic diversion they must be considered a failure. The only sound purpose of every detachment must be to divert or hold down a force of the enemy larger than itself, and this Wingate's force failed to achieve. No unit of the Japanese force earmarked for the offensive in Manipur was permanently diverted to deal with it, and though the arrival of three battalions of that force was delayed, that delay lasted only a month and was of little importance. No more than twelve second-line enemy battalions were employed at any time to deal with the raiders. The expenditure of effort therefore was throughout greater on our side than on that of the Japanese, and the expedition must be considered as contrary to the principle of economy of force. Great enterprise, gallantry, and endurance was shown in the operation, but these qualities were equally fully and more usefully displayed when the force reverted to a more nor-

mal role in co-operating with the Northern Command troops in the attack on Mogaung and Myitkina.

3. The operations for the crossing of the Irrawaddy in January and February, 1945, are well worth study in detail. First came the forcing of the river line by the 19th Division to the east of Shwebo above Mandalay, to divert the army's attention from the main area of crossing. Then the 2nd and 19th Divisions appeared, facing Myinmu below the city, again to divert attention from the advance of IV Corps to the river farther to the south, still in the Pagan area, which came as a complete surprise to the enemy. The Japanese directed their main effort to checking and driving back the 19th Division in the north, where fierce fighting went on for several weeks, so that the crossings of the 20th Division at Myinmu and of the leading division of IV Corps at Nyaungu found them too weak to afford effective resistance. Both these crossings were effected at points where the sectors of two hostile divisions joined and which, as both appeared to be topographically unsuitable for the purpose, were only lightly guarded. These first passages of the river allowed our other divisions, the 2nd of XXXIII Corps and the 17th of IV Corps, to be subsequently effected under cover of hard fighting in the bridgeheads. The crossing of the 2nd Division at Ngazun in particular affords a model of how this sort of operation should be carried out under conditions of great difficulty and peril. By the end of February the Fourteenth Army had effected seven crossings of the Irrawaddy on a front of 200 miles and opened the way for our decisive victories at Mandalay and Meiktila, which quickly followed.

4. The operations in Burma in 1945 display to the full the value of air supply for ground forces whether on the defensive or the offensive. Without it XV Corps' operations in Arakan in the spring of 1944 must have ended in a repulse, if not in a serious disaster, and the Japanese conquest of Manipur would probably have been successful in destroying IV Corps before it could be rescued by XXXIII Corps. In both cases our troops, split up and surrounded by the enemy in small isolated defensive boxes, must have been quickly starved out and have shot away all their ammunition unless their needs had been supplied by air; but these resources enabled us to rob the enemy of the fruits of an initial success which he could not clinch or complete. Similarly, on the offensive, air supply endowed our operations with a rapidity and flexibility which made it possible for us over and over again to surprise and outpace the Japanese at critical junctures. The operations for the crossing of the Irrawaddy and the final dash for Rangoon offered typical examples of the value of air supply for an army on the offensive. To ensure the fullest possible advantage from this valuable factor of success, the closest co-operation of ground and air commanders and forces

is, of course, essential from first to last; but such necessity is now fortunately recognized as a principle of modern war.

5. Despite the advantage of air supply, the operations in Burma were severely hampered throughout by administrative difficulties. Mechanical transport could not move off the few roads available, and animal transport, if less limited in range, was in inadequate quantity for our needs. It was now rarely possible to use simultaneously in the forward zone all our numerically imposing forces in theory available. From time to time divisions had to be moved at night out of the country by road or by air transport to allow of their relief by fresh ones, instead of being simply withdrawn to back areas to rest and refit as in other theatres, because our new administrative services, even with the air to help, could not cater for more than a given number of troops. This limitation in the forces which we could use at any one time against the enemy thus went far to neutralize our own over-all numerical superiority over him. Similarly our rate of progress and power of manœuvre were much hampered by administrative difficulties, and would have been more so but for the great resourcefulness and energy displayed in overcoming them. Some of the feats of this sort which were performed in the course of the campaign were remarkable in the history of war, and afford an inspiration and a model for the future. When studying the history of the operations in Burma, this constant handicap under which our forces laboured must always be borne in mind.

APPENDIX

It is stated in the syllabus for the Staff College examination that "in the military history paper candidates will usually be left a choice as to the campaign from which they choose their examples to illustrate the principles of strategy and tactics." To round off his study, therefore, it is suggested that the reader should set himself to discuss some of the following maxims from F.S.R. in the light of the examples drawn from campaigns outlined in these pages:

1. "Moral qualities are the soul of victory."
2. "There must exist unity of direction and control of the armed forces."
3. "Impersonal, passive or weak command inevitably results in loss of morale, in want of resolution, and ultimately in failure."
4. "The true leader by his confidence, his personal courage, his imagination, and his unswerving resolution, inspires his troops with the determination which compels victory."
5. "The full power of an army can be exerted only when all its parts combine in action."
6. "In order to achieve victory a commander must sooner or later assume the offensive."
7. "To choose the right time and place for changing from a defensive to an offensive attitude demands high qualities of resolution and skill on the part of a commander, intelligent anticipation of orders on the part of subordinates, and reliable communications throughout all portions of the force."
8. "Information as to the positions and movements of the enemy affords the best guarantee against surprise."
9. "Every commander is at all times responsible for the protection of his command."
10. "To carry out its task the rearguard must keep the enemy at a distance from the main body, and at the same time must be able to withdraw without becoming seriously involved or running the risk of being destroyed."
11. "A commander (when acting on the offensive) must be clear in his own mind as to what he has to do in order to achieve his object and be determined to succeed in his task. His plan, conceived in accordance with the principles of war, must be simple and based on the best information obtainable; it must be understood by subordinates and carried through by them with resolution."
12. "It is by superior fire-power and not by men's bodies that success is won."

13. "Success must be followed up until the enemy's power is crushed."

14. "Everything possible must be done to economize force in the defence, in order that the maximum power may be available for eventual offensive action."

15. "Orders must always be legible, clear, precise as regards time and place, and brief."

16. "In framing orders no unnecessary responsibility will be thrown on subordinate commanders. At the same time there should be no unnecessary interference with the methods by which they carry out what is required."

17. "On the efficiency of intercommunication the success of military operations will very largely depend."

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